

SLEEPLESS IN BERLIN! XLR8R REVEALS THE GERMAN CAPITAL'S BEST-KEPT SECRETS

64-PAGE PULL-OUT
INSIDERS GUIDE
TO BERLIN

XLR8R

101
OCTOBER
2006

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PHOTO BY ANNA SCHLAEGER,
TAKEN FROM HER RIO CLUB COLLECTION.
SEE PAGE 88 FOR MORE.

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ED'S RANT SECRET CITY



XLR8R editor Vivian Host embraces her inner goth at Love Parade

As you read this, a few people have poison pens at the ready, poised to send me angry missives for putting “Berlin Wasted Youth” on the cover. Little do they know I have on my Kevlar editing outfit and a special shield that deflects commentary from people with no sense of humor. Hey, my boss doesn’t call me a 14th-level paladin for nothing.

So what *is* going on with this cover? It’s a special slogan tweak by graphic designer Paul Snowden, a Kiwi expat who inadvertently created the best sticker campaign in Berlin when he began the viral distribution of three simple decals reading “Wasted” “German” “Youth” in white block letters on black. You will run into these words on some wall in Mitte next to a shop selling overpriced clothes from young designers, while eating *halloumi* at some forgotten Kreuzberg falafel stand, or staggering home from Bar25 while wacked out of your skull on three Ecstasy pills. They’re a cheeky reminder of the town’s reputation as “Berlin rave city,” and you can read them with pride or disdain. Snowden—who sees rave as the modern equivalent of punk rock—devised Wasted German Youth as a tribute; his website says the slogan “embraces the beauty and the insanity of rave culture and acknowledges what Berlin does best.” Amen, brother.

So let’s say you’re over rave. Your idea of a good time is not staying up for three days, careening from dirty squats to swank minimal techno boîtes. Relax, already. Put the kettle on, drop the *genmai cha* teabag in the “Magda Make The Tea” mug (check www.ubercoolische.com if you don’t know what I’m talking about), and sit back and read some stories. There’s a piece about a breakcore producer who borrows his mom’s opera costumes to go on stage, some interesting insights about the impact a 28-mile wall had on youth culture, war stories from Americans who’ve made the move, and even a fairy tale about seven Boy Scouts camped out in vector land. We’ve pulled recluses out of hiding and dragged special tips from the city’s notoriously tight-lipped residents. (A word to you Berliners: Your city has so many hidden treasures, bizarre twists, and insider-only spots that no one could reveal even half of them, but we respect your ability to keep a secret.)

Using a team of Berlin-based photographers and designers, we’ve tried to capture the essence of Berlin’s style, from wild nights at the Rio Club to chill summer afternoons by the River Spree. If we’ve got you sufficiently hyped to visit, this issue also comes with a special keepsake city guide listing bars, clubs, and restaurants that your *Rough Guide* may have looked over. (And, as always, we’ve got more information that we can squeeze in a magazine; visit www.xlr8r.com for exclusives and extras from this issue.)

If you do find yourself in Berlin, be respectful and open-minded, keep your eyes open for the unexpected, and have a glass of *apfelschorle* for me. And you, put that voodoo doll away!

—Vivian Host, Editor

FAVORITE GERMAN WORD?
“TSCHÜSS! IT’S PRONOUNCED ‘CHEW-SS’
AND IT MEANS ‘BYE BYE!’”

STAFF BOX

CREATIVE DIRECTOR Brianna Pope (bp@xlr8r.com)

EDITOR Vivian Host (vivian@xlr8r.com)

MANAGING EDITOR Ken Taylor (ken@xlr8r.com)

SENIOR WRITER Toph One (redwine@xlr8r.com)

COPY EDITOR Frances Reade

EDITORIAL INTERN Fred Miketa (fred@amalgam.us)

STAFF WRITERS Eric K. Arnold, Mike Battaglia, Sarah Bentley, Nick Chacona, Roy Dank, Martin DeLeon II, Matt Earp, Rob Geary, Ross Hogg, Christine Hsieh, David Katz, Jason Leder, Luciana Lopez, Monty Luke, Cameron Macdonald, Peter Nicholson, Tomas Palermo, Brion Paul, Brock Phillips, Dave Segal, Jesse Server, Philip Sherburne, Patrick Sisson, Scott Thill, Josh Tonnissen, Janet Tzou, Tony Ware, Rico Washington

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS Anna Balkrishna, Derek Beres, Bryan Borzykowski, Cameron Cook, Stacey Dugan, Derek Grey, David Hemingway, Max Herman, Philipp Hofmann, Justin Hopper, Josiah Hughes, Brandon Ivers, James Jung, Ryan Kilman, James Lee, David Ma, Robbie Mackey, Larisa Mann, Steve Marchese, Megan Martin, Piers Martin, James Mayo, Fred Miketa, Doug Morton, Bruno Natal, Alexander Posell, Ryan Romana, Matthew Schnipper, Evan Shamoan, Rachel Shimp, Daniel Siwek, Eric Smillie, Ryan Sommer, Velanche Stewart, Jake Tisdale, Brolin Winning

DESIGNER David Clark (davidc@xlr8r.com)

STAFF PHOTOGRAPHERS Christopher Glancy, Morgan Howland, Paul O’Valle, Dustin Ross, Christopher Woodcock

CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS B+, Qarim Brown, Gene Glover, Eric Johnson, Kieran Florian Kolmer, Stefan Korte, David Lubarski, Dirk Merten, Norther, Marion Paris, Lucy Pope, Inigo Robin, Ragnar Schmuck, Anna Schlaeger, Paul Snowden, Jane Stockdale, Kai von Rabenau, Michael Scott Whitsoni

STAFF ILLUSTRATORS Chuck Anderson for No Pattern, Derek Morris for Trophy

CONTRIBUTING ILLUSTRATORS & DESIGNERS Frederik Frede, Jan Kruse, Pfadfinderei, Slang International, Paul Snowden

PUBLISHER/EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Andrew Smith (andrew@amalgam.us)

DIRECTOR OF ADVERTISING AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT Roy Dank (roy@amalgam.us)

MARKETING AND SPECIAL PROJECTS Jennifer Marston (jenn@amalgam.us)

MARKETING INTERN Antaeus Roy (antaeus@amalgam.us)

OPERATIONS CONSULTANT Michael Prommer (michael@amalgam.us)

ACCOUNTING MANAGER Jamie Kochan (jamie@amalgam.us)

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND ONLINE PRODUCTION Bryant Rutledge (bryant@amalgam.us)

ADVERTISING AND MARKETING ASSISTANT Kelsey Guntharp (kelsey@amalgam.us)

CO-PUBLISHER Arias Hung

ADVERTISING: Dial 415.861.7583, fax 415.861.7584, email advertising@xlr8r.com, or mail XLR8R Magazine, 1388 Haight St. #105, San Francisco, CA 94117.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: Domestic subscriptions are \$20 (one year, 10 issues) and \$40 (two years, 20 issues), Canada \$40 (one year) and \$80 (two year), all other international are \$50 (one year) and \$100 (two year). Subscribe by credit card online (www.xlr8r.com) or send payment to XLR8R Subscriptions, 1388 Haight St. #105, San Francisco, CA 94117. Payment made out to “XLR8R Magazine,” US funds only. International orders must be paid by credit card or international money order. Questions? Email subscribe@xlr8r.com or subscribe online at www.xlr8r.com.

CIRCULATION: Newsstand distribution through Curtis Circulation. For direct retail sales contact Jennifer Marston at 415.861.7583 x26 or jenn@amalgam.us.

BIG THANKS TO... Conny and Anna from Rio Club, all the Berlin photographers (especially Dirk, Jane, and Ragnar) who went the extra mile, Gamall Awad at Backspin, Jon “Daddy” Galkin and Justin Miller at DFA, Tom Bioly at Permanent Vacation, David Day and Eric Benoit at Forced Exposure, Veronica at Minimal Wave, Bill Linn and Jackie Ballinger at Griffin, Daniel Sakai, Erin Hutton at Native Instruments, an extra special *vielen dank* to Bianca Richter, Philipp “Rave Unit” Hoffman, Melissa Taylor, Nathaniel Hamon, Christina Wheeler, Staider from Royal Bunker, Lina Kunimoto and Anja Haupt at DGV, Denise Graff at Irie Daily, Frederik Frede, Barbara Hallama at iTunes, Daniel Best at Best Works, Cassy Britton, Susan “Qzen” Langan, Dirk Völler, James Fucking Friedman, Guido Engelhardt, and all of the Get Physicals for the information, tours, wild times, and hospitality.

ON THE COVER: “Berlin Wasted Youth” by Paul Snowden

CONTACT US: San Francisco Main HQ: 1388 Haight St. #105, San Francisco, CA 94117; New York Office: 350 Seventh Ave. #1504, New York, NY 10001; letters@xlr8r.com, Fax 415.861.7584

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ISSN # 1526-4246 CSA # 1741454



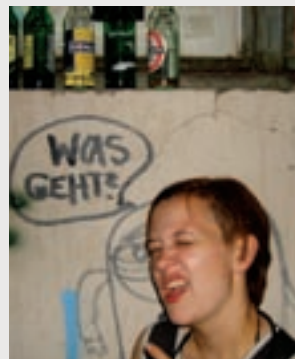
CONTRIBUTORS



PAUL SNOWDEN

Paul James Snowden was born 1970 in Auckland, NZ, and now lives and works in Berlin. A combination of classical fine arts studies, corporate-advertising agency schooling, and his involvement in music form the base for his work, a style he describes as "striving for the simple, the radical, the classical, the immortal." His work concentrates on youth culture and communication, seeing design as a way of life: true, rich, and real.

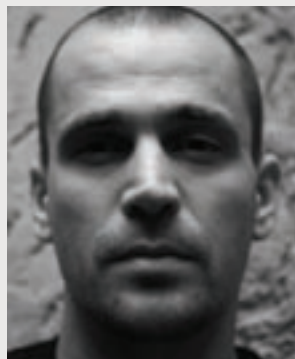
www.paul-snowden.com



JANE STOCKDALE

Photographer Jane Stockdale hails from Banchory, Scotland, has two different colored eyes, about two funny jokes in her arsenal, and is currently living the dream in Berlin, pissing away redundancy money like a Tour de France winner. She shoots for *Vice* UK and Berlin, MTV, *Ex-Berliner*, *NME*, and *ID*, and photographs various festivals, bands, DJs, and rappers. People say she's like Billy the Kid with a camera.

www.janestockdale.co.uk



DIRK MERTEN

Photographer Dirk Merten was born in 1973 in a small town near Berlin. After five years of working in the film industry as a camera assistant, he began taking portrait- and fashion photography gigs, and now has a list of clients that includes International Deejay Gigolos, Kitty-Yo, Perlon, Poker Flat, *De:Bug*, and *The Wire*. For this issue, he shot K.I.Z., Marok, Luciano, A*Class, and others in his dynamic black-and-white portrait style.

www.dirkmerten.com



RAGNAR SCHMUCK

Born in 1975, Ragnar Schmuck studied photo design in Stuttgart before moving to Berlin, London, and New York, and gaining valuable experience while working as an assistant to a number of compelling professional photographers (while simultaneously winning a few high-profile awards for his own work). Since 2001 he's worked as a freelancer out of Berlin, where he's active in both the editorial and advertising sides of the business.

www.ragnarschmuck.com



GENE GLOVER

Photographer Gene Glover worked in music video and film production in New York before moving to Barcelona and Paris in 1999. He moved to Berlin in 2000 and began concentrating on music and fashion photography. He now shoots for *De:Bug*, *Style & The Family Times*, and *Luxus*, as well as for record-label clients like Kitty-Yo, Tribeca, and Sony/BMG. Glover spent the past 18 months documenting almost everyone in the international grime scene as they came through Berlin.

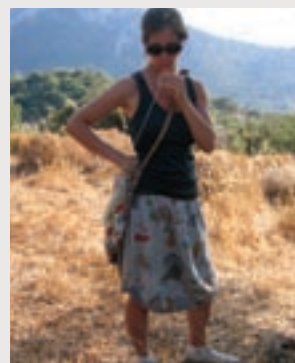
www.gene-glover.com



SLANG INTERNATIONAL

Nathanaël Hamon was born in France in 1973 and is a self-taught independent graphic designer who works primarily in print. He's created record covers for labels such as Orthlorng Musork, Tigerbeat6, Kill Rock Stars, Kitty-Yo, and Shitkatapult. Like the expatriates in the feature that he illustrated, (see "Far From Home," page 56), Hamon also now lives in Berlin.

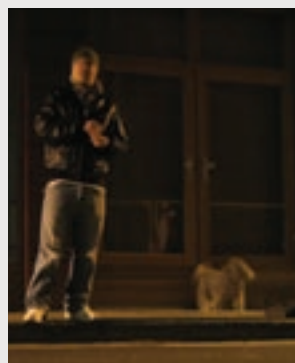
www.slanginternational.org



ANNA SCHLAEGER

Graphic designer and photographer Anna Schlaeger, 27, has lived in Berlin for the past three years. She studied graphics and photography at art school in Offenbach (HfG Offenbach) and recently completed her degree. Schlaeger now works as a freelancer for the Rio club, the Apartment boutique, and various Berlin-based fashion designers (such as Vladimir Karaleev and Daisuke Nagata). At the moment she is curious about her future.

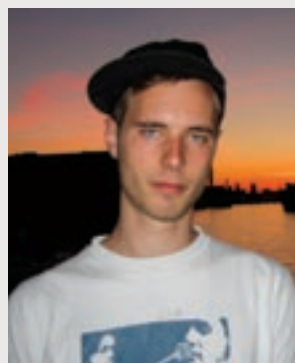
www.annaschlaeger.com



FREDERIK FREDE

Frederik Frede likes rooftops at sunset, wearing parkas with furry hoods, and taking nighttime walks through sketchy parks in Neukölln. A former drum & bass DJ, he runs the blog Republish and designs for the likes of Grime Time and Carhartt while rocking J Dilla on the loudspeakers. Aside from illustrating this issue's reggae feature, he provided invaluable Berlin advice, German translations, Dexplicit MP3s, and mid-night rides on his red Vespa.

www.frede.net



PHILIPP HOFMANN

Once, Philipp had long blonde hair and played in a death metal band. Now he is totally hyped on minimal techno and will happily take you to six clubs in one night. Hoffmann is a former press person for L.A. label Plug Research, and says he misses SoCal's Mexican food, track-bike culture, and girls who say "like" 20 times in a single sentence. He was a tireless tour guide, letting our editor crash on his floor in his floor in Friedrichshain and making her iced lattes.

BIANCA RICHTER NGUYEN

Named after Mick Jagger's wife, Bianca Richter Nguyen's destiny was to become a raver chick. But instead of sleeping the days away, she became one of the hardest working ladies in Berlin. Busy with managing art- and music-related projects for Nike, she also handles promotion and press for fashion companies and events. Along with curating exhibitions for galleries like Circleculture, Spiritroom, and 95gallery, Bianca deeply loves diplomacy, expensive hotels with Feng Shui interiors, and baby monkeys.

www.positive-inc.com



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Like us? Hate us? Write us! Email letters to letters@xlr8r.com or send mail to XLR8R Magazine 1388 Haight Street #105 San Francisco, CA 94117.



Conflicting ID-eologies

Great issue #100! The "Our Staff Picks the Best Albums of the Last 100 issues," (issue 100, "For the Record") is slammin': Aphex Twin, Autechre, and Boards of Canada are all up there in the top 20. But why not more IDM in your magazine? I know it probably doesn't sell as well as trendy house, but it's much better. Peace.

Thad Moyer

Komputer Lieb

Easily one of the best magazines around... I'm proud to have seen your success grow from local to international over the years. Keep being you... What's up, Toph!

Lynn Ness, via MySpace

XLR8R responds:

Thanks for the add. We thought about throwing up a nice big pot leaf and 420 gif on your comments page, but instead we'll just thank you for checking us out. Everyone's doing it—why don't you? Be our friend at www.myspace.com/xlr8rmagazine

International Lovers

Happy 100th you guys.

So happy to see the book grow and prosper; you guys have been an amazing outlet for this culture and music. I don't think things would be the same for my labels or any of the musicians you've covered without your unwavering dedication to electronic music.

Sam Valenti IV, *Ghostly International* (devoted reader since Issue #31)

Pod People

The XLR8R podcast seems to be overlooked compared to some of the others out there, but they consistently impress me with the breadth of stuff they throw together, the production quality, and the simple freshness of everything they play. Also enhanced, so

I can click through more info on the artists when it's playing—every podcast should do that.

CrashCrush, via iTunes comments page

Bryant responds:

Well, someone's listening obviously. Keep up on the latest and greatest music around with the XLR8R podcast, found at the iTunes store and at xlr8r.com. And check out our new Interview Series, with clips from ESG, Girl Talk, Ariel Pink, and more.

XLR8R Meets Rockers Uptown

Yes, yes XLR8R! Hope all is stellar! Congrats on the 100th issue. It looks radstyles! Thank for the article styles!

Onelove,

Sean Reveron, *Cultural Engineer*

Marcus Burrowes, *Chief Designer*

Rockers.NYC

CORRECTIONS: In our breakcore feature, "Live Fast" (issue #98), Karen Schoellkopf took the uncredited photo of Criterion & Doily. Her work can be found at www.karenschoellkopf.com. In our J Dilla feature, "Still Shining" (issue #99), we mistakenly labeled a photo of Dilla, Karriem Riggins, and DJ Rhetmatic as being taken at a Dilla show. It was actually taken at a Beat Junkies show in L.A. In our feature on The Knife, "Dark Times" (issue #99), we misspelled the last name of brother/sister duo Olof and Karen Drejter.



XLR8R'S "WISH YOU WERE HERE" CONTEST

Get your paws on some fresh Berlin gear from Puma and Forced Exposure.

Over the course of this issue, we've made all sorts of friends, and Puma is definitely one of our closest and dearest. For our grand prize, Puma serves up a heaping helping from their Mongolian BBQ line of running shoes. One male and one female will cop a gift certificate to design their own kicks on Mongolian BBQ's pimped-out website. And to properly set the tone for your mental trip to one of Europe's most beautiful and enthralling cities, our good friends at one of America's finest distributors, Forced Exposure, lace you with the goods from a few of Berlin's most amazing artists. Snag copies of Sascha Funke's *Boogybytes Vol. 2* (Bpitch Control), Steve Bug's *Bugnology 2* (Pokerflat Recordings), Madga's *She's a Dancing Machine* (Minus), DJ Naughty's *One Night in Berlin* (Eskimo), A Guy Called Gerald's *Proto Acid: The Berlin Sessions* (Laboratory Instinct), and Kaos & Sal P's *Collectors Series Pt. 2: Danse, Gravit  Zero* (Faith).

www.mongolianshoebbq.puma.com, www.forcedexposure.com, www.bpitchcontrol.de, www.pokerflat-recordings.com, www.m-nus.com, www.faithtorecordings.com, www.eskimorecordings.com, www.laboratoryinstinct.com



For this year's city issue, we drilled each of our subjects about what they thought was Berlin's best-kept secret—if there's one thing XLR8R loves, it's giving up big secrets. So, what's your town got to offer in the way of hidden gems? **Send us at least three of your city's best-kept secrets; those with the most creative responses will win the prizes below.**

TWO GRAND PRIZE WINNERS (ONE MALE AND ONE FEMALE) will each receive a gift certificate to create their own pair of shoes at Puma's Mongolian BBQ website and copies of the CDs listed above.

THREE RUNNERS UP will receive a copy of each of the CDs listed above.

Entries will be accepted via snail mail and email. Entries must be received by October 31, 2006. Send your answers to XLR8R's "Wish You Were Here" Contest, 1388 Haight St. #105, San Francisco, CA 94117 or email contest@xlr8r.com with "XLR8R's Wish You Were Here Contest" in the subject line.



BJ "BITTER" BASTARD'S ICH HASSE BERLIN



Berlin's so great, blah, blah. Techno rave blah. Stay up all weekend, Wall, döner kebab, Ecstasy, yadda yadda. Bunker, beer, underground, artsy, bahn this, tram that. Bitter Bastard thinks the only thing more boring than Berlin is hearing people talk about how great it is. Here are 10 reasons it sucks.

1. Toilets and toilet paper An unwritten part of the *Communist Manifesto* was that you have to be very in touch with your own shit. That is obviously why old toilets in East Berlin have a shelf in them—when you take a dump it doesn't fall into a pool of water, but just sits there on the porcelain and stinks to high heaven until you flush it down. Perfect for scat fiends; horrorcore for the rest of us. Meanwhile, the toilet paper appears to be made from recycled cardboard. It is brown and bumpy and is the equivalent of sandpapering your bum.

2. Winter Berlin seems like the perfect place in summer: full of lakes, everyone is friendly. Then winter comes, and the whole city is dark by 2 p.m., no one leaves the house, and people in the street can barely manage to grunt at you. Ever heard that phrase "colder than a witch's teat"? Yeah, well, that's what happens when you're on the same latitude as Moscow.

3. Expensive subways Everything in Berlin is cheap except the public transit, which costs nearly \$3 to go one way and something like \$7.50 for an all-day pass. BYOB—as in "bring your own bike."

4. Long-ass street names The German language is all about cramming as many nouns together as you can to make a word. When it comes to street names, this gets insane. Try to read a map where every street has 20 letters in its name. Can anyone tell me how to get to Niederkirchnerstrasse and Stresemannstrasse near Riechpietsch Ufer? No? Okay, *danke*.

5. Neo-Nazis Yes, they still exist and they throw rocks at Asian people's heads and beat down gay folks. But they're not so easy to recognize anymore—many have abandoned the rather rad skinhead uniform for ugly-ass tracksuits made in Romania.

6. Minimal techno twats It's hard to believe, but there are so many minimal techno nights and DJs in Berlin that you could live there for months and not see them all. People get really trapped in (and serious about) this scene, to the point where, if you mention breakbeat, they give you the stink face. And don't even think about telling that Villalobos joke...

7. Central Berlin during the Loveparade The Loveparade is an excuse for every white-trash ho-hah from the suburbs to pull out all the fluorescent and silver-lamé spandex, glittery half-shirts, and neon parachute pants they've been hiding in their closet since the mid-'90s, and wear them all at once. Walking through Tiergarten after the parade is over is akin to traversing an alien landscape full of toxic piss and passed-out frat boys in furry chaps.

8. Medieval people Twenty odd years ago, it was fashionable to look like you were from medieval times. Eventually, people realized that being dirty, greasy, and continually clad in black and lace was a lot of wasted effort, and most of the goths and gutter punks disappeared. Actually, that's not true—they just got old and moved to Berlin, where it is not uncommon to see someone wearing combat boots and a black wool shroud in 100-degree weather.

9. No air conditioning About that 100-degree summertime weather... There's no air conditioning.

10. No cold drinks If you ask for ice, you will get one cube, because ice cubes cost money to make. The only legitimately cold drink in Berlin is beer, meaning you will find yourself drunk and dehydrated a lot.

SanDisk



MoVagaimy ain't in this thing's blood. Rhapsody, eMusic, Napster, Yahoo! Music—this freedom-lovin' MP3 playa craves variety. Spread the love yo, 'cause this is one **liberated Lil' Mohsta.**

Lil Mohsta.com



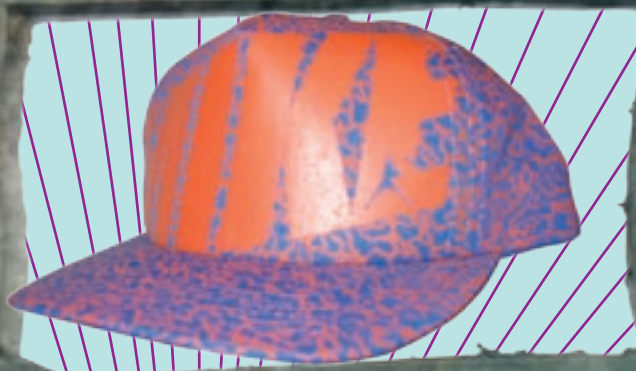
Sansa™ e200

Das Booty

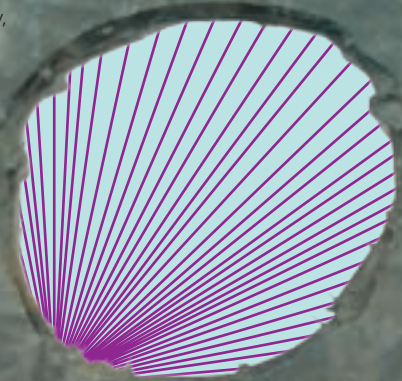
Übercool goods from some of Berlin's best stores.



Bärlinale: 300 Berliner Bears from A-Z book by S.Wert Design (€19.90)
Available at Overkill Shop, www.overkillshop.com



Mike hat (€34)
Available at 95 Gallery, www.95gallery.com



Yackfou Clipart t-shirt (€21.90)
Available at Overkill Shop, www.overkillshop.com



Fluorescent tank top (€49)
Available at Star Styling, www.starstyling.net



Mazine women's sweatshirt (€59)
Available at Overkill Shop, www.overkillshop.com



Doily sweatshirt (€90)
Available at Star Styling, www.starstyling.net



TV Tower candle (€10)
Available at Rotation Records, www.rotation-records.de



Little Miss Luzifer doll (€75)
Available at Soma, www.soma-berlin.de

Coral vase (€169)
Available at Star Styling, www.starstyling.net



Checked dress (€79)
Available at Star Styling, www.starstyling.net



Kazik women's t-shirt (€21.90)
Available at Overkill Shop, www.overkillshop.com



Little Miss Luzifer skull coin purse (€19)
Available at Soma, www.soma-berlin.de



Zine, one of a selection (€7)
Available at Rotation Records, www.rotation-records.de



SUNNY SIDE UP

Style notes from Irie Daily founder Jaybo.

The biggest hip-hop brand in Berlin is helmed by an iconoclastic Frenchman named Jaybo, who traveled around the world (Sweden, Senegal, Nigeria) before a lost passport forced him to settle in Berlin's Kreuzberg district, where he spent nights freestyle MCing, DJing, and bombing walls, and days designing club flyers.

In 1994, three punk rock kids from a merchandising company asked him to create a reggae-flavored clothing line that would bridge the gap between punk and hip-hop. Eight printed tees later, Irie Daily—which sports a vector-heavy skate look not unlike DVS or Etnies—was born. Via a poetic email, Jaybo explains that the name means “taking life the easiest way, everyday” and he says he owes Irie Daily's success to Kreuzberg: “It's our hood, where everybody has supported us by buying our

clothes and having fun at our parties.”

Jaybo (a.k.a. Monk) does more than just design Irie Daily's look; he's also the art director behind street music/culture/fashion mag *Style & The Family Tunes*, and recently released a compendium of his work, *Lord of Mess: My Head Is A Visual Township* (softcover; DGV, \$55). No better person, then, to explain what Berlin style is about. “You will recognize a real Berliner by their understated, very personal style,” he says. “Since the Wall fell, there has been an influx of international artists showing off with bling bling and bullshit, but the real Berlin is a lot of tattoos and punk rocking on one side and Lacoste polos meets bad shoes on the other side!” *Vivian Host*

www.iriedaily.de, www.spread.de, www.die-gestalten.de

Five of Jaybo's custom typefaces are included (on a disc) with *Lord Of Mess*. Shown here is “Monkobits.”

MELT! DOWN

Aphex, Isolée, and Erlend Øye rock some Teutonic socks.

A disused steel-mining facility nearly two hours east of Berlin hosted *Intro's* genre-shattering Melt! Festival (July 14-16). Pop stalwarts Pet Shop Boys competed with the utterly charming duo of Phonique and Erlend Øye—who DJed and sang, respectively. Trail of Dead's energetic guitars and on-stage mosh-pit antics impressed; Isolée's set was enough to make Ecstasy obsolete, and Nathan Fake blew crowds away with neon-pink noisescapes and artful machine noise. Repping Deutschland were cutesy German indie band MIA, Beastie Boys-influenced techno rap duo Mediengruppe Telekommander, and the dorky Deichkind, who paired '90s dance hits with costumes and fire. Late-night lake swimming, bratwurst, and a smoke tempted me away from a wee-hours dance-off with Sid Le Rock and Moonbootica, and I missed the second day. (Friends reported 2ManyDJs and Battles rocked, and Aphex Twin and his phalanx of wheelchair-bound basketball players disappointed.) Designed to please “rock nerds, pop aesthetes, and electro heads,” Melt! proved suitably mind-altering. *Phillip Hoffmann*
www.meltfestival.de



MIA (Photo by Kieran)



ACTION SHOES PF FLYERS SEMAPHORE FLAGS MODEL'S OWN



BOLD TYPE

Catching up with Germany's best music mags.

From reggae 'zine *Riddim* to hip-hop journals *Juice* and *Backspin* to Berlin bi-weekly *Zitty*, Germany seemingly has enough homegrown publications to serve a whole continent. Here's the scoop on five of the country's crucial music mags, covering the latest indie rock, bleeding-edge techno, and everything in between. *Ryan Kilman*



SPEX (€4,50)

The grandfather of music mags (26 years old!), this avant-pop outpost prints 30,000 copies per month (each comes with a free CD). Though the artists are international, the pieces (entirely in German) retain a casual, laid-back feel influenced by the mag's Cologne surroundings. They also sponsor the yearly Monsters of Spex event as part of Cologne's c/o pop festival. **Cover stars:** Phoenix, Fat Freddy's Drop, Pharrell, Morrissey
www.spex.de
www.monsters-of-spex.de



DE:BUG (€3,30)

Since summer 1997, Berlin independent *De:Bug* has billed itself as the "magazine for electronic aspects of life," covering both dance music and the digital culture surrounding it (such as music technology and media theory). Those who read German will find it a clever mag with a loose, personal feel to the writing. **Cover stars:** Jamie Lidell, Mu, Carl Craig
www.de-bug.de



SLICES (FREE)

Sponsored by T-Mobile (under its Electronic Beats banner), *Slices* is available at record shops throughout Europe. Since March 2005, this DVD magazine has presented music videos and interview features (in English and German) with a cutting-edge selection of techno artists. Electronic Beats also produces a free music magazine of the same name, and debuts DVD series *Pioneers of Electronic Music* on October 27 with a documentary on Richie Hawtin. **Cover stars:** Dominik Eulberg, Mode-selektor, Underground Resistance
www.electronicbeats.net



INTRO (FREE)

Distributing over 100,000 copies around Germany, Cologne's *Intro* can hardly be called *Spex's* little brother any longer. It covers the vast umbrella of indie rock, hip-hop, and electronic music in German, with detail-oriented, left-leaning, and in-depth pieces on big names and Deutsch favorites. *Intro* also sponsors the two-day Melt Festival. **Cover stars:** Red Hot Chili Peppers vs. Mike Watt, The Rapture, International Pony
www.intro.de



GROOVE (€3,90/FREE)

Founded by DJ T. in 1989, this rather purist electronic music mag moved from Frankfurt to Berlin five years ago. *Groove* has the highest circulation of Germany's electronic music mags (half the copies are free, the other half sold with 32 extra pages and a CD) and it covers the vast breadth of credible dance music (keeping the cheesy trance and prog out of the picture). **Cover stars:** Hot Chip, Theo Parrish, Àme, DJ Koze
www.groove.de



GETTING AGGRO

A Berlin gangsta rap label wages war with the German government.

Pronouncing the title of rapper Sido's 2004 single "Arschficksong" ("Assfucksong") is enough to put one off anal sex entirely. But it's not a lack of lube that's got the German government riled up. Multiple releases from Sido's label—top-selling German gangsta rap imprint Aggro Berlin—contain explicit depictions of sex, drugs, and crime, with rappers B-Tight, G-Hot, and Fler unleashing lyrics that suggest violence towards women and gays. Big deal, you say, Geto Boys blasting in the background, but the work has caused the *Bundesprüfstelle*—a federal agency that examines media works that are potentially harmful to young people—to add six Aggro Berlin albums onto an official list, making them subject to being banned at any time. Artists like Fler regurgitate a stance once popularized by N.W.A.—that they're just telling the stories of Germany's mainly immigrant-populated ghettos—but one can't help but think these tales of Berlin are exaggerated, considering that it's still relatively safe to walk through Berlin's sketchier neighborhoods (like parts of Wedding and Märkisches Viertel, the housing project from which Sido hails). Regardless, the label has come up with a solution: take the music to a land where profane rap flourishes. To wit, Aggro Berlin recently inked a deal with Caroline to distribute their music in the United States. Their first American outing will be a re-release of Fler's latest album, *Der Trendsetter*, followed by *Aggro Videos*, a CD/DVD set featuring 20 music videos from the label. It remains to be seen what residents of Cabrini Green or Queensbridge Houses think of the Aggro sound—that is, if they get around to translating B-Tight's "Neger Bums Mich" ("Nigga, Bang Me.") *Tyra Bangs*
www.aggroberlin.de

Pictured: A masked Sido (which stands for "Super Intelligent Drug Victim"), looking like the lovechild of MF Doom and Liberace.

Roland
www.rolandus.com



MODERN CLASSIC

JUNO-G: Synthesizer Look familiar? True to its heritage, the new JUNO-G is affordable and user-friendly. But that's where the comparisons to yesteryear end. This modern marvel packs a studio's worth of sound, sequencing, and audio recording into one amazing instrument. Sharing the same high-powered processor as Roland's famous Fantom-X series, the JUNO-G puts a world of first-class sound and performance features under musicians' fingertips. Add more sounds via SRX expansion and create complete songs with the onboard audio/MIDI recorder. The JUNO-G — your future classic!



The Juno-G ships with editing software (Mac OS X, Win XP/2000) that lets you perform serious patch and sample-editing tasks on your large computer monitor.

CLOTHES CALL

Precision-cut and pared-down are buzzwords for Berlin's up-and-coming clothing designers.

ADD

Looks like: Skinny jeans; artfully tailored (but slouchy) cuts; gauzy v-necks; relaxed, techy looks done in organic colors of cotton and denim; men's and women's items with a unisex feel.

www.add-contact.com



ELLEN ALLIEN

Looks like: The inside of the globetrotting DJ's unconventional suitcase; minimal techno meets *Little House on the Prairie*; East Berlin fashion frumpery in a pared-down color scheme of grey-tinged pastels and white; interchangeable shifts, skirts, and tops with minimal feminine touches (a ruffle here, a gather there).

www.fashion.ellenallien.de



KAVIAR GAUCHE

Looks like: Pieces built for layering; dramatic dresses; *All That Jazz*-meets-*Starship Enterprise* stewardess in a smoky bar downtown; lots of leggings; saucy precision in a sensible color palette.

www.kaviargauche.com



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SPIN CYCLE
News and gossip from
the music world

Grimestep International, a documentary DVD of the European grime scene featuring **Skream**, **Sway**, and **Grime Time**, is out this month, with an installment on North American grime to follow in March 2007. Find out more at www.myspace.com/grimestep. • "Otto's Journey," by Scottish anthem surgeon **Mylo**, is featured in a commercial (starring figure skater Michelle Kwan) for Kraft's Zesty Italian salad dressing • **Ewan Pearson** shuttled between Berlin, London, and NYC to produce **The Rapture's** latest record alongside **Paul Epworth**. The Rapture has been working with **Danger Mouse** on a new album of his, due out in late 2006/early 2007. • Canadian duo **Death From Above 1979** filed for divorce in late July, meaning band member Jesse F. Keeler will now have more time to disco-fy the world as half of **MSTRKRFT**. • Justin Vandervolgen and Phyllis Forbes of the recently-deceased **Out Hud** wed in Northern California in June. • Slain Vallejo, CA rapper **Mac Dre** has some memorial Thizz Nation sneakers with his crazy-ass face all over them. Buy your own at www.siccness.net. • L.A. hip-hop indie **Glow-In-The-Dark Records** has inked a deal with NYC's infamous **Rawkus** to manufacture and

market the forthcoming album from rappers **Panacea**, due out October 3. • New York DJ/producer **Nickodemus** (of Wonder Wheel and Turntables on the Hudson) has signed to Washington, DC's Eighteenth Street Lounge stable. His first releases for ESL will be a remix of **Thievery Corporation's** "Supreme Illusion" (out October 3) and a reworked version of Nico's *Endangered Species* record, out October 31. • Monkey Hustle Films and Headliners Productions are capitalizing on drug addiction with their second DVD, *Crackheads Gone Wild: New York Vol. 2*. "We're showing people the worst of the ghetto, and entertaining people at the same time," says Headliners co-founder Kyron Hodges of the so-called "drug awareness DVD," which is accompanied by a mixtape (and soon a feature film, cartoon, and a book). Go insane at www.crackheadsgonewildnewyork.com. • Rave trolls **PaperRad** have a new DVD out, *Trash Talking*, on Load Records. Cop that sheezy at www.loadrecords.com. (Drugs sold separately). • This month in hyphy: **Federation's** *It's Whateva* (Reprise) drops on October 31 and **E-40's** *Sick Wid It* Records releases **Turf Talk's** *West Coast Vaccine* and the **Sick Wid It Umbrella's**

Chalupa Chasin. (We're sure the title of the latter does not refer to the Mexican tortilla boats we used to get served at the grade school cafeteria). • Opened in May, Seattle's **BLVD Gallery** presents a well-rounded program of underground art. Upcoming shows include psychedelic brain squiggles from **Robert Hardgrave** and **Warren Dykeman** (November), work from Green Lady/HunterGatherer's **Todd St. John** and **Gary Benzel** (February '07), and stencil stuff from **Logan Hicks** (March '07). See www.blvdart.com for more. • In late June, techno faced a major merger when rumors circulated that **Richie Hawtin** and **Ellen Allien** were dating; rumor has it they are no longer together. • **Jason Forrest** has started a new power rock trio (purportedly called the Jason Forrest Band); it includes Elisabeth King on keyboards, Ethan Schaffner on guitar, and Forrest on laptop and vocals. • Swedish duo **The Knife** announced US live dates for their theatrical performance, which has been known to include projection screens and live puppetry. The brother-sister pair will play at NYC's Webster Hall (Nov. 1), S.F.'s Mezzanine (Nov. 3), and L.A.'s El Rey Theater (Nov. 4). • Design duo **WeWorkForThem** has launched a new web magazine featuring profiles of, interviews with, and new work by graphic designers including **Geoff McFetridge** and **Genevieve Gauckler**. Read it at www.youworkforthem.com/profilemag. • Words, politics, music, and lots more words await at **DJ/rupture's** blog, Mudd Up! Check it at www.negrophonic.com/words. • Time to work on our costumes...

1. Panacea; 2. Ewan Pearson; 3. We Work For Them web magazine cover; 4. Mylo; 5. Turf Talk; 6. Nickodemus

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WWW.WASTED-GERMAN-YOUTH.COM

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FIGHT THE POWER

INCREASE THE PEACE

Words Vivian Host

Image Paul Snowden

On the wall of the Panoramabar office is a quote from German philosopher Goethe that reads "Be hardworking during the day and swine-like at night. This is how the world is best." It's as apt a motto as any for Berlin, where people partying hard in the club at midnight on a Monday *will* be making it to work the next day.

Of course, that work is likely running a record label, doing freelance graphic design, promoting clubs, producing records—or probably some combination of all these things. Even before the Wall toppled on November 9, 1989, Berlin had emerged as a haven for artists and freaks; it is rapidly gentrifying, but it remains one of the cheapest and most liberated European capitals. If you follow electronic music, you've already heard Berlin's charms being touted by the techno expats who have flocked to the city's Eastside from London, New York, Chile, and points further afield. Yes, they're annoying—people in the first flush of love usually are—but they're generating an influx of ideas and inspirations, and in the process further enhancing this international city, which is constantly morphing into something new.

Don't listen to Berliners when they sound jaded—just chalk it up to their sarcastic, dark sense of humor (a German rarity). The city is massive, with a million tiny niches—minimal techno fiends engaged in a constant transatlantic circle jerk with Detroit have no idea what's going at outdoor reggae spot Yaam, French free tekno kids partying at a breakcore gathering in the Supamolly squat wouldn't dream of setting foot in the rather upscale electro-house club Week12end.

And it's not because they wouldn't be allowed in. On the contrary, Berlin is one of the most freedom-oriented places on the planet—you can dress how you want, kiss who you want, and drink in the street (as long as you're not being a dick to someone else). Panoramabar is one of the only clubs with a door policy—it's nothing to do with trainers, more along the lines of "no douchebags allowed."

Berlin is one of the most dynamic cities on the planet. History is really fresh in the minds of its people, and they're determined to do things differently. The architecture doesn't hide things—you're likely to see a bomb-scarred church next to a modern office building, a decaying Communist-era factory in the middle of a beautiful green park—and the people usually don't either. They tend to be blunt and stick up for what they believe in, which—combined with the translation of the much-less-flowery German language into English—sometimes makes them seem very imposing indeed.

Berliners hole up in dark winters, hunched over computers, sewing machines, and samplers, and emerge in spring into a modern Babylon of their own making, where there's a special surprise waiting down every tagged-up stairwell, gravel driveway, and unmarked doorway. And at the rate things are going, the Berlin you see today will probably be completely different than the Berlin five years from now, or five minutes from now. One thing's certain: When the apocalypse comes, Berliners will be ready.



PATRIC CATANI & GINA D'ORIO

Twisted pop agitators go from starting riots to booty-shaking PowerPoint presentations.

Words Cameron Macdonald
Photos Dirk Merten

Ec8or's song title "Discriminate Against the Next Fashionsucker You Meet (It's a Raver)" caught my eye when I first read about them a decade ago. Ec8or, comprised of Patric Catani and Gina D'Orio, were soldiers in digital hardcore's shock battalion, Germans bombarding the mid-'90s post-techno underground with subsonic breakbeats, the shrapnel of heavy metal guitars, and ear-piercing, riot-inciting vocals. Soon after the release of *We Can All Be Rich in America* (on Beastie Boy Mike D's Grand Royal label), the DHR scene imploded under its never-stated-but-always-implied maxim "Too fast to live, too young to die." Catani proceeded to create a soundtrack for an imaginary '80s videogame called *Flex Busterman* and produce music for rapping puppets known as Puppetmastaz; he's currently releasing a blender-splat of cartoon music, noisecore, and Amiga techno as Candie Hank. Meanwhile, D'Orio played Patty Hearst in a musical by Stereo Total's Brezel Göring and continues to radically reinterpret the notion of the girl group as one half of cult favorites Cobra Killer. *XLR8R* asked the two about their digital hardcore days and their surreal, ghetto-tech-goes-to-school project, A*Class.

How did Ec8or form?

Patric Catani: We formed Ec8or when I came to Berlin. I came from Cologne and there definitely was a lot of stuff to catch up with in Berlin. All of our music represents a political idea. I personally also see my work in a Dadaistic way and think there are many ways to express a political attitude. I can't imagine looping that old Amen break over and over like a hamster in a wheel just because there is something for it that you call a "market."

Gina D'Orio: We started playing in our first bands, [rehearsing] everyday, doing gigs, playing '60s garage-punk stuff, playing the Amiga 500—it went on like this. Later, it became Ec8or. That's what we did and still do. It comes straight from our hearts. It's about pushing the popular music [to] a different level, where you can transport more critical consciousness in collaboration with different people: writers, people who do movies, journalists. It's about making honest songs with a certain amount of depth; songs [that] become the daily hit [in 2006], not clichéd stories that belong [in] medieval [times]. People awake if entertainment becomes information; with people who are awake, we can aim for a better society. Popular music has an enormous influence, especially on young people who are still developing, so we have a lot of responsibility. These "hitmakers" pretend they don't have to have responsibility. They are liars; they are moralistic gangsters. If you describe life honestly [in] your music, how you really see it, [that] might be as the fans see it too—we are one [with] them; we understand them better than those briefcase-carriers who strangle themselves with their own ties.

What were Ec8or's best moments?

PC: The twinkles, the bass, the lights, and the cherry blossoms.

GD: The cars, the clouds, and those moments when you think while watching the birds go by.

"It's psychedelic. It's a satire...
It's booty house."

-Gina D'Orio



FAVORITE GERMAN WORD? PATRIC CATANI: "STEUERHINTERZIEHER. LITERALLY, IT MEANS 'CONTROLBACK PULLER,' WHICH IS A TAX DODGER." GINA D'ORIO: "SANDUHR, MEANING 'SAND CLOCK' ('HOURLASS')"

How has Berlin's electronic scene changed in the past decade?

PC: It's different and I would not say it's better. It's much more difficult to make a last-minute party. If you stick posters in certain streets they are gone in 20 minutes. I think the nice, naïve touch [that] Berlin had 10 years ago is gone. I want to stay a music fan; I also do radio shows from time to time where I just play new, unknown, weirdo music from all over the world. I don't want to turn into that "professional" music sportsman. You find a lot of them in Berlin these days. It's good to have a nice base and friends to make crazy shit with. Certain stuff appears also in a bigger context. With the Puppentmastaz, we are quite successful in different parts of Europe and what I earn with that goes back into my other projects. That's the way I like to work because it's good to have hair, it's good to have money, and it's good to have sex.

GD: Berlin is dead. It's over... Berlin is worth a trip. Berlin stays Berlin. All is right. All wrong.

How would you describe the A*Class sound and performances?

PC: A*class is a black-humored, poisoned needle dealing with problems caused by the ignorance and twisted

morality of the Western world. It [doesn't only] pick on America, but America definitely deserves to have a main part in there. It takes the Detroit and Chicago booty bounce sound, but transforms it into something "productive," "positive," and "useful" without dirty language. It explains why a good person should know about the Elbow Law, and gives you good hints [about how] to fuck other people over. You'll have the perfect learning motivator with songs like "I Don't Like the Prom" or "Let's Read a Book." [It's] intellectual booty house only for the headstrong. Chances are good that (the upcoming album) will be released by the Church of Scientology, or on the German label Trikont. [The performance] is a booty-shakin' PowerPoint presentation-overhead projector scratching and all. It's an exciting stimulation and enlargement of certain brain cells. We have wild read-alongs, where you can feel your inside powers rise up with a bang.

GD: It's psychedelic. It's a satire... It's booty house.

Cobra Killer and Kapajkos's *Das Mandolinenorchester* is out now on Monika. Candie Hank's *Groucho Running* will be released in November on Sonig. To read more about Ec8or history and Candie Hank's "salon music for vampires," visit www.xlr8r.com. www.cobra-killer.org, www.candiehank.com



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FAVORITE GERMAN WORD?
JOHANNA, SICK GIRLS: "KUSSMUND. IT TRANSLATES AS 'KISS-MOUTH'
AND MEANS 'IRRESISTIBLE LIPS.' I LIKE THE SOUND OF IT."

FAVORITE GERMAN WORD?
CHRISTIAN FUSSENEGGER, GRIME TIME: "IT MUST BE VORBEIFAHRSCHIESSEREI.
IT'S NOT ACTUALLY A GERMAN WORD, BUT IT SOUNDS GREAT.
SASHA CAME UP WITH IT—IT'S THE LITERAL TRANSLATION OF 'DRIVE-BY SHOOTING' INTO GERMAN."

GRIME TIME & SICK GIRLS

Two sets of bass fiends meet up and make big noise.

Words Vivian Host
Photo Gene Glover

Christian "Fussi" Fussenegger, a video journalist and one of the six heads behind Berlin's Grime Time, has no problem rattling off ridiculous stories about the UK grime MCs and DJs that have played their event. "DJ Twister of Fire Camp only ate his dessert after Lethal B had tested and approved of it," writes Fussenegger. "Monkstar of Newham Generals was quite freaked out by 'all the white people looking at him' in the restaurant; Lady Fury was totally perplexed by the Berlin crusties at Friedrichshain flea market; and DJ Cameo and D Double E were not aware that there had been anything called the Berlin Wall or the Iron Curtain."

Though people in the grime scene are known for taking themselves way seriously, Fussenegger and partners—including WMF club owner Gerriet Shultz, filmmaker Heidi Frankl, Jahcoozi singer Sasha Perera, student Jan Ramesh-Schoening, and graphic designer Frederik Frede—put together a banging party while keeping their sense of humor. Nobody in the crew DJs, so egos don't get in the way—the simple goal is to inject a dose of roughneck lyricism and big-ass bass into the scene. "I think Berlin will be the hotbed for a new style of music that combines genres—if people here manage to drop their stupid fixation with minimal techno and 4/4 crap," says Fussenegger, who also hopes to see a "Bob Marley or Jello Biafra of grime" one day.

"All the established clubs invite the same DJs; no clubs are taking risks or trying to be cutting edge anymore," agree the Sick Girls. "It's time for something new." As Sick Girls, Alexandra Droener and Johanna Grabsch are doing their part to push the boundaries of the Berlin club scene, which still has few DJs that play multiple genres. The duo represents the gamut of underground bass music—grime, *baile* funk, booty house, dancehall, bass-heavy IDM—with their Revolution N°5 parties, and are good friends with the Grime Timers. (Grabsch was booking WMF when Fussenegger first walked in the door—with the Wiley album and a Nasty Crew mix in hand—and proposed the Grime Time party; Droener has known club-owner Gerriet for 14 years, from DJing and working the door at WMF and doing bookings for "dirty techno dungeon" Tresor.)

"We never planned to be DJs," says Grabsch, "but people responded so well and so quickly, we felt the urge to go on." The pair's first "gig" together was a last-minute tag-team set in August 2004 in a tiny room of Tresor called the Tuna Bar. "I played Drexciya and 2 Live Crew and Ward 21 and Wiley," recalls Grabsch. "It was one of the greatest nights of my life, finally having met someone I was able to communicate with only through music. We each played a track which the other answered and it worked so well. We even ignited some of the techno ravers with our 'strange' music. I remember Alexander Kowalski coming up and asking us for titles, shaking his hips heavily."

In a city of very serious DJs, Sick Girls know their mission: to make people dance to music they have never heard before while keeping the fun intact. "Grime Time and Revolution N°5 deliver the same feel of a new beginning, like how we felt [at the start] of techno and drum & bass," says Droener. "It's all just a natural development [between us and Grime Time]—we've just stuck with the people who've got the same open and adventurous mind in terms of music. I just love them."

www.grimetime.de, www.terrible.org/mt-web/sickgirls

(From left to right) Christian Fussenegger, Johanna Grabsch, Gerriet Shultz, Sasha Perera, Alexandra Droener, Frederik Frede, Heidi Frankl

INSPIRATION



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FAVORITE GERMAN WORD?
PFADFINDEREI: "BIRD IN GERMAN, IS VOGEL,
BUT IN BERLIN SLANG IT'S VOEL.
PEOPLE USE IT AS A GREETING,
LIKE 'EH DU, VOEL?' ('WHAT'S UP, MAN?!')"



PFADFINDEREI

Graphic troopers embark on a mission (with some help from Modeselektor).

Words Vivian Host
Photo and Images Pfadfinderei

Pfadfinderei means “path finders.” It also means “boy scouts,” and after you meet the Pfadfinderei it’s hard to say which meaning is more appropriate. Pfadfinderei consists of seven graphic designers between the ages of 25 and 37, all called by nicknames (including Codek, Honza, Krsn, Flori, Tobi, and Critzla, which means “scribbles”). Their office is down one flight of stairs from the headquarters of Ellen Allien’s techno imprint Bpitch Control, in a building they refer to warmly as “the house.”

I mention these facts because it’s impossible to separate Pfadfinderei’s graphic design from who they are. The crew injects their unique humor and playfulness into the world of so-slick flash animations and cold, hard vectors—their work refutes the tired argument that techno has no soul, combining the organic and the personal with the sharp lines and bright, flat colors of the ultra-computerized future.

The Pfadfinderei coalesced on November 4, 1999, at its core four East Berlin natives. Intimately tied to the city’s techno culture from the start, they did club visuals and flyers, and Honza’s childhood friendship with Allien led to them designing the logo and look of Bpitch Control. “Our graphics fit well to the music,” says Flori, who’s got a visual way with language and a striking voice that sounds like it came from a gravel pit. “Techno music is sharp beats, hard beats, big beats. It’s concrete, like our graphics, which are very blocky, clear, and direct. “In the end, it’s a personal thing with [Bpitch],” concurs Critzla, who has the words “working class” tattooed across his back in big, black block letters. “We have been friends for a long time and there is a feeling for it: for the label, for the music, for the conscience.”

Ellen Allien Paul Kalkbrenner Modeselektor Kiki Sascha Funke
SmashTV Tomas Andersson Housemeister Silversurfer Sylvie Marks

BPC-CAMPING-TOUR

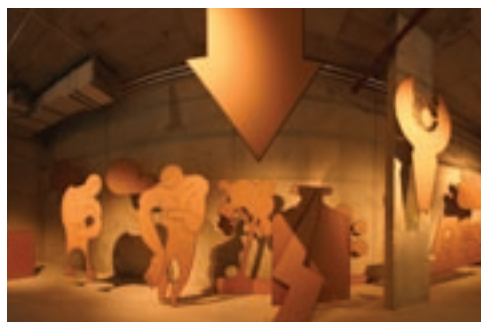
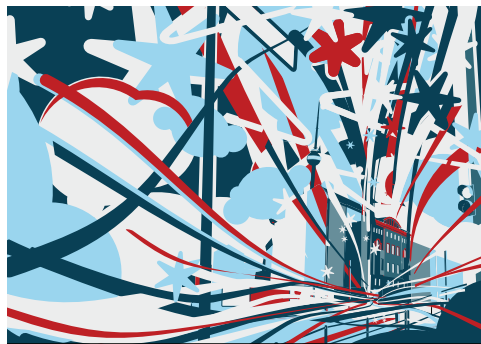
FEBRUARY AND MARCH 2005



Perhaps the best part of the Pfadfinderei's Bpitch association has been their work with label mavericks Modeselektor. The septet has formed a tight bond with Gernot Bronsert and Sebastian Szary, bon vivants who fuck up the techno rave formula by throwing in dancehall rhythms, massive basslines, and punch-drunk breakbeats. The collectives often work in tandem—Pfadfinderei supplying album cover art and tour visuals for Modeselektor, and them returning the favor with music for special projects like *Labland*, a recent collaborative DVD.

"We started a weekly party with them in 1998," says Szary of their first work together. "It was called Labstyle (later, Labland) and it was 50% visuals and 50% music—the idea was to watch with the ears and to hear with the eyes." Pfadfinderei used the event to perfect their VJing—which they continue to do about once a month at festivals and clubs—an activity they see as synonymous with their motion graphics and print work.

"We have several rules," explains Codek. "We don't sample anything; everything you see we filmed or designed on our own. The second rule is that we share everything; if someone makes a new movie, he shares it immediately so everyone can play it. It works sort of like a jazz combo. We stand there with three Powerbooks

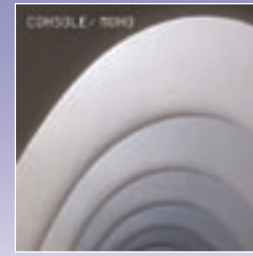


and a mixer and start combining the movies, like a session. Everybody hits on his computer keyboard a certain kind of thing he hears in the music: one takes the high hat, the other the bassline, someone else goes for the mood of the whole song. It's always different because everyone hears music in a different way."

The Modeselektors also see themselves as storytellers. "We are sitting every day in the studio and creating stories," says Szary. "And we are always searching for the best-sounding bass drum." A listen to 2005 album *Hello, Mom* confirms that the only constants of their music are gut-rumbling low-end and punchy drums; fitting for a duo influenced by grime, dancehall, and Aphex Twin as much as their techno upbringing.

The Modeselektor boys are hilarious on the phone, going off on tangents about starting conga lines at clubs and hyphy act Federation ("They are singing that they wear white tees, and every day they buy a new one for a buck!") laughs Szary incredulously. "That's genius. I love it!" But they are deadly serious that what they do should not be defined. "All genres and styles are old-fashioned," orders Bronsert. "No category is modern enough."

Pfadfinderei & Modeselektor's DVD *Labland* (Dalbin) is out now.
www.pfadfinderei.com, www.modeselektor.com, www.bpitchcontrol.com



CONSOLE
Mono CD/LP

Bavarian wunderkind **Console** returns to his home label to release *Mono*. Besides being the lead programmer for **The Notwist** and **13th & God**, Herr **Gretschmann** has worked with **Björk** and **Depeche Mode**. *Mono* includes covers of **Brian Eno** and **Sonic Youth**. Somewhere between pop and ambient, between hip-hop and rock, there is Console.



STEWART WALKER
Persona's Progress CD

Stewart Walker's ex-pat status has not kept him from conquering Europe. Now a Berliner, Stewart's **Persona** label continues to climb the ranks of label lists. Here, he mixes the catalog, including **Touane's** "Basic," from **Tiefschwarz's** *FabricLive* CD. "As this collection clearly demonstrates, [Persona's] identity is solidified as a bastion of top-shelf techno." —XLR8R

Touane's "Basic" appears on this month's INCITE CD.



TOBI NEUMANN
Flieder Lieder CD

Berlin-based producer, remixer and DJ **Tobi Neumann** is one of the masses of German DJs which flooded Ibiza this year, alongside the **Kompakt** crew, **Villalobos**, **Luciano**, **Get Physical** and so forth. *Flieder Lieder* (or "lilac songs") sounds like summer, from loop-masters like **Thomas Melchior** to the deep house remixes of **Femi Kuti**. Neumann goes where no other dares to tread.



SEÑOR COCONUT
Behind the Mask Mixes 12" series

Although he lives in Santiago, Chile today, **Uwe Schmidt** is the patron saint of German ingenuity. Berlin's **Essay Recordings** is home to his new **Señor Coconut** project. *Yellow Fever*, his inspiring reggaeton/baile/cumbia compilation *Coconut FM* and all the remixes—including a totally massive rework from that largest of Chilean-Berliners, **Ricardo Villalobos**. It's as if they've switched places.

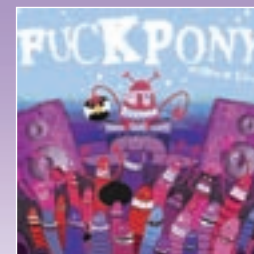
Señor Coconut's "Behind the Mask (**Ricardo Villalobos** Remix)" appears on this month's INCITE CD.



GUDRUN GUT
Members of the Ocean Club 2CD

If the Berlin scene has one mother, it might well be **Gudrun Gut**. As seen in this issue, the *Ocean Club* is her home and this low-priced 2CD set introduces you to it. Her extended family includes **Ian Pooley**, **Thomas Fehlman**, Krautrock icon **Klaus Schulze** and even **Paul Van Dyk**. These days, Gudrun runs **Monika Enterprise**, home of **Barbara Morgenstern**.

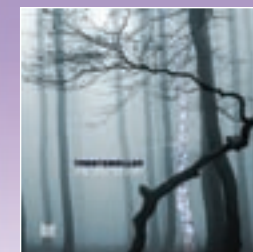
Gudrun Gut's "Move Me" appears on this month's INCITE CD.



FUCKPONY
Children of Love CD/2LP

As seen in this issue, **Jay Haze** is one of the hardest working artists in the Berlin scene. From **Contexterior** to **Kitty-Yo** to **Tuning Spork**, Philly's native son finally settled in Berlin to join the technopian ranks. **Fuckpony** is Jay at his most fun. With help from **Samim**, he bumps Detroit against Chicago, Germany against the Bronx. As he says: "It's only music, baby."

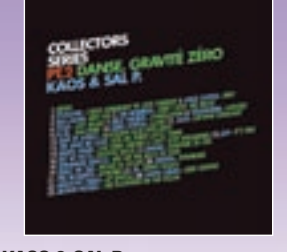
Fuckpony's "It's Only Music" appears on this month's INCITE CD.



TRENTEMØLLER
The Last Resort 2CD/2LP

At this time, **Trentemøller** must be the hottest producer and DJ in the world. Everyone from **The Knife** to **Röyksopp** has requested him. *The Last Resort* on Berlin's **Poker Flat** imprint is not that kind of stuff. Instead—it is introverted and dark as a submarine at night. Bass tones howl like depth charges and whirling torpedoes are tracked by radar. A master at work.

Trentemøller's "Miss You" appears on this month's INCITE CD.



KAOS & SAL P
Collectors Series Pt. 2: Danse, Gravitè Zéro CD/2x12"

A near-legend in Berlin, **DJ Kaos** teams up with true legend **Salvatore Principato** (aka **Sal P**, from **Liquid Liquid**) to mix down a space disco lesson for the ages. Names like **Sylvester**, **Juan MacLean** and **Yello** bump up against dusty rarities like **Logic System** and **Velodrome**. From the A&R guru that brought you *DJ Kicks*.

Velodrome's "Capataz" appears on this month's INCITE CD.



CASSY
Panorama Bar 01 CD

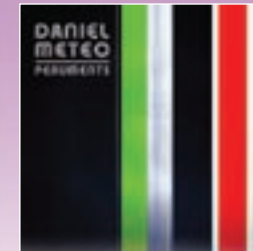
The definitive minimal mix from the mistress of minimalism: **Hard Wax** store clerk and **Perlon** vocalist **Cassy**. The first CD in the *Panorama Bar* series, named in honor of Berlin's world famous dance club. Here old (**DBX**, **Baby Ford**) meets new (**Villalobos**, **Mathias Kaden**) meets strange (**Ø**, **Shackleton**) under the masterful manual manipulation of **Cassy Britton**.



LUOMO
Paper Tigers CD

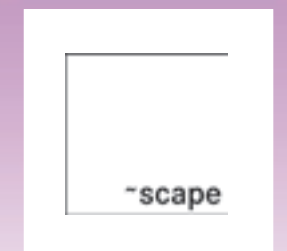
Luomo is back. After reissuing *Vocalcity* on his own label to near universal acclaim, *Paper Tigers* sees the Finndisco master plumb the depths of the dancefloor once again. **Luomo** now lives in Berlin, challenging all comers with his future disco sound. Singles abound, rips and blogs blowin' up, but the real CD drops October 24th.

Luomo's "Really Don't Mind" appears on this month's INCITE CD.



DANIEL METEO
Peruments CD/2LP

Recently selected to be on **Ellen Allien's** *Time Out Presents the Other Side of Berlin*, CD, **Daniel Meteo** is one of Berlin's best-kept secrets. From a tiny town, Meteo soon moved to the big city and became known as a premiere dubtronic selector. Fold this into remixes for the **Orb**, **Dntel** and a project with **Dabrye**, and you get the drift: *Peruments* is his debut release on his own **Meteosound** label.



VARIOUS ARTISTS
~scape 12" series 12" series

Known mostly for its full-length albums from **Pole** or **Safety Scissors**, Berlin's **~scape** label has recently amped up their class 12" series. Past releases from **Stephen Beaupré** and **John Tejada** will be joined soon by **Deadbeat** and **Stefan Betke** as **Pole**. In winter 2006, the label sees a new album from iconic Berlin genius **Jan Jelinek**.

Deadbeat's "One.One.Five" appears on this month's INCITE CD.

NATIVE INSTRUMENTS

A decade of tweaking, twiddling, and twerking.

Words Ken Taylor

Ten years ago, audio engineer Stephan Schmitt and software developer Volker Hinz created Generator, one of the virtual world's first modular synthesizers. The pair (both native Berliners) had oodles of creativity and computer know-how, but very little business acumen. They turned to Daniel Haver, an erstwhile manager of a graphic design firm who was passionate about music but, admittedly, not very musically inclined. In lieu of a salary, Haver accepted a two-year engagement in exchange for stock in the company, and Native Instruments was born.

"I was pretty sure we were going to end up being a very successful and bigger company," says Haver, now Native Instruments' CEO. "That was the reason I joined... I was completely convinced that Stephan had invented a product that would have a strong influence on the industry, and that the Japanese companies could not really compete with their quite expensive, inflexible hardware synthesizers. I was freaking out about the possibilities of this tool and how it would affect the music I listened to."

A fan of everything from techno to dub, Haver says that one of his goals was to have some of his

favorite artists using NI's gear. "By now, I'd guess at least a third, if not half, of all these people have released records with Native Instruments products," he says cheerfully. Those names? Folks like Underworld and Carl Craig come to his mind.

Native Instruments' success is hardly shocking, though. Their software and synthesizers—including Generator, Traktor, Reaktor, Absynth, and the new Kore, a full hardware/software sound platform—have continuously pushed the envelope. But along with great tools and the founders' clear vision—one that stipulated creating open-source instruments for all types of producers and performers—Native Instruments has always had the advantage of having Berlin's burgeoning scene by their side.

"The music scene here is very strong," Haver reminds us, "and having these musicians basically living alongside us, and being in the middle of it all and getting their feedback immediately, was always very important for us."



Native Instruments leaders
Stephan Schmitt and Daniel Haver

FAVORITE GERMAN WORD? DANIEL HAYER: 'AUTHENTISCH, WHICH MEANS 'AUTHENTIC.' THE COMPANY AND THE PEOPLE THAT WORK THERE REALLY REPRESENT WHAT WE RELEASE, SO THIS IS AN IMPORTANT WORD FOR ME.' NATIVE INSTRUMENTS ALWAYS WAS PRETTY AUTHENTIC; THE COMPANY AND THE PEOPLE THAT WORK THERE REALLY REPRESENT WHAT WE RELEASE, SO THIS IS AN IMPORTANT WORD FOR ME."



FAVORITE GERMAN WORD?
"I ALWAYS GIGGLE WHEN I HEAR THE WORD HABGIER. IT DOESN'T SOUND FUNNY; IT'S MORE ITS CONNOTATION. THE ENGLISH MEANING IS 'AVARICE.' IN GERMAN, THE EXPRESSION IS A COMBINATION OF THE WORD HAB, WHICH MEANS 'HAVE' (BUT ALSO 'CHattel'), AND GIER, WHICH MEANS 'LUST'."

JAN JELINEK

A minimal techno mastermind sows some wild oats.

Words Eric Smillie
Photo Kai von Rabenau

Berlin-based producer Jan Jelinek has always presented himself as a sound designer; he's even gone so far as to say he's "not a musician." Hacking away at tiny, clicking samples and carefully arranging them over deep, slow basslines, he made a name for himself as a master of the sequencer with 2001's *Loop-Finding-Jazz-Records*, an album that definitively shaped techno in the early Aughties. But recently, Jelinek's love affair with the sequencer seems to have waned; on his new album, he does away with it altogether.

"Over the years, I've found the idea of programmed music fascinating, because the composing process is so far from the traditional ideas of music-making," he explains. "All these romantic clichés of virtuosity and authenticity are gone—music is made like graphic design. [But] after focusing on that for a few years, I'm a bit tired of this kind of work with sequencers that organize the whole arrangement."

Jelinek built his new album, for Pole's Berlin label ~scape, from tracks he recorded quickly in single takes on a modest bit of live equipment. "Originally, this setup was a compromise," he confesses. "Last year, I had to give up my old stu-

dio, and it took a while for me to find a new one. My tracks were the result of not being able to use the sequencer yet nevertheless trying to reach a musical goal."

He may sound tentative, but Jelinek has plenty of experience with live improvisation. On 2005's *Kosmischer Pitch*, he looped Krautrock samples on his computer while jamming on mixer, effects, and synths for hours at a time. Following the lead of the '70s bands that his samples honor, he picked his favorite bits to make up the album's final tracks. Snuggling up even closer to rock, he hit the road with drummer Hanno Leichtmann and guitarist Andrew Pekler as the Kosmischer Pitch Band, manipulating loops, guitar (similar to a thumb piano), bass synth, and effects pedals in the group's noisy, effects-heavy improvisations.

One can't help but conclude that Jelinek's ultimate goal is to leave his ball and chain, the sequencer, at home. But techno heads need not fear: "I see my step into improvising as one that doesn't exclude programmed music," he says.

Jan Jelinek's new album comes out November 7 on ~scape. A *Kosmischer Pitch Band* album is in the works. www.scape-music.de

LUCIANO

The Chilean techno mafia's most psychedelic knob twiddler.

Words Philip Sherburne
Photo Dirk Merten

Perhaps no one better typifies the Bohemian artist myth of Berlin than Lucien Nicolet. Better known as Luciano, Nicolet is the Swiss-Chilean artist behind a slew of fêted records for Playhouse, Peacefrog, and Perlon; in a few short years, Cadenza, the label he co-curates with Geneva's Serafin, has become the toast of techno. And his long-ass DJ sets, often alongside Berlin minimal kingpins like Richie Hawtin and fellow Euro-Chilean Ricardo Villalobos, are the stuff of legend.

Like most of his colleagues in the "Chilean mafia" (Villalobos, Dandy Jack, Andrés and Pier Bucci, Dinky, Matias Aguayo, et al) politics and expat culture have led Nicolet down a peripatetic path. He grew up in Switzerland, returned to Chile in the late '80s to help kick off the country's fledgling rave scene, and eventually returned to Switzerland to forge a career all but unattainable in the Southern Cone. Frequent gigs at Berlin institutions like the Panoramabar and Beat Street meant he was already a local fixture by the time he moved here a few years ago.

His music's very placelessness—its *unheimlich* sense of estrangement and discovery, longing and return—is what makes it so quintessentially Berlin. While he's branded a minimalist, his densely psychedelic tracks brim with references and ideas, from Autechre's generative structures to Basic Channel's chugging dub-techno, all underscored with a particularly Latin sense of rhythm. Nicolet's music is shot through with a subtlety that bars it from most main rooms, but listening to him tweak his endlessly shifting, hyper-percussive tracks, it's obvious that he's several steps ahead of almost everyone in dance music.

Nicolet's basement studio, which he shares with the duo Exercise One, lies a stone's throw from the Hard Wax record store in Kreuzberg; so central is the location that Nicolet, Exercise One's Marco Freivogel, and Lan Muzic artist Jacopo Carreras recently opened Post26, a small café and gallery, directly upstairs. (One of the sandwiches on the menu is named "The Big Luciano.") On a recent Friday afternoon, the clientele was a who's-who of European techno: Playhouse artists My My were conducting an interview, Mike Shannon was coping wi-fi, and the proprietor of Vakant Records was hanging out.

Nicolet may soon be leaving Berlin; the recent flooding of his studio and a number of personal reasons are pointing him back towards Switzerland. Post26 will remain, as will Nicolet's influence on Berlin's revitalized techno community. Next time you swing through the city, sample a Big Luciano in tribute.

www.lucien-n-luciano.com, www.cadenzarecords.com, www.post26.org

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Morr Music a record label from Berlin. *Huhu!*

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MORR MUSIC

A label brokers peace treaties between the indie rock and electronic realms.

Words Julie Gerstein
Illustration Jan Kruse

"Look, don't call it esoteric," says Thomas Morr gruffly. He's discussing one of the myriad adjectives often ascribed to his label, Morr Music, and is slightly irritated. "That word makes me want to kill myself, or somebody else. We are *not* esoteric," he continues via phone from his Berlin offices.

If not esoteric, then Morr and his eponymous label certainly are eclectic. Morr's extensive roster—which includes Múm, Lali Puna, and Electric President—tends to pull from both electronic and indie rock worlds; in fact, genre-twisting and crossover are major tenets of the label. "When we started, we worked with artists that were sick of being in bands and wanted to start producing electronic music," says Morr. "Sometimes they came from electronic music and wanted to get back into playing in bands."

Morr started the label in 1999 after a lengthy stint working for record distribution company Hausmusik.

"I was a passionate electronic music listener, and mainly into small and indie labels from the UK like Earworm," he explains. Frustrated with the relative dearth of quality electronic labels, Morr and high school friend Jan Kruse (who guides the label's visual aesthetic) made a calculated decision to do it themselves.

Initially, the label was envisioned as a tiny, niche-y vanity project, but soon after its first release (B. Fleischmann's *Poploops For Breakfast* LP), Morr realized there was money to be made and a gap to be filled. Soon after, he relocated the enterprise from Munich to Berlin, where he quickly fell in with the city's emerging wave of electronic artists and labels. "There was loads of media that supported the music scene, and we had a very vital club scene in Berlin," says Morr of the city in the late '90s. "Every couple of months a new club was opening, and there were shitloads of new artists and companies starting up."

Morr now says Berlin's glory days are over, and that sluggish sales of electronic music have translated into increased factionalism and tension within the city's electronic music community. "I'm just trying to withdraw from the whole Berlin thing," he explains.

But a lack of coherency in the scene isn't going to stop Morr from releasing music he believes in. "Ten years ago, I was into really minimal, experimental electronic music, but I can't listen to that anymore," he says. "[Now] everything is more diversified. Now we're defining our own genre."

www.morrmusic.com

FAVORITE GERMAN WORD?
"SCHNICK SCHNACK. IT DOESN'T REALLY TRANSLATE TO ANYTHING IN ENGLISH.
IT'S A NONSENSE WORD."



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HARD WAX

The city's longest lasting techno institution marches on.

Words Dave Stenton
Photo Ragnar Schmuck

In a city undergoing constant, rapid change, where the hottest party spots can radically alter in just a few weeks—either moving to new locations or disappearing altogether—the world-famous Hard Wax record store is something of an anomaly. Mark Ernestus—who, with Moritz Von Oswald, comprises techno groundbreakers Basic Channel and revolutionary electronic dub act Rhythm & Sound—opened Hard Wax in 1989. Initially the store traded vintage soul, funk, reggae, and hip-hop but quickly shifted focus towards electronic dance music when the first imports from the then-fledgling Chicago house and Detroit techno scenes hit Europe.

Seventeen years on and not much has changed. Hard Wax continues to be one of Europe's leading purveyors of quality American dance music, as well as the distributor for some of Germany's most respected labels (including Sleeparchive and the labels related to Smith N Hack and Basic Channel). The store is still located in the same decaying building down an anonymous driveway in Berlin's largely Turkish Kreuzberg neighborhood. Hard Wax is on the building's third floor—and the tags and stickers that line the grubby flight of stairs are testimony to the thousands of DJs and producers that have visited over the years. The floor above used to house

Rhythm & Sound's studios and is still home to Dubplates & Mastering, where Stefan Betke (a.k.a. Pole) cut more than just his teeth.

Those who visit Hard Wax on a regular basis can't help but rub shoulders with Berlin's biggest DJ talent. Ricardo Villalobos is one of Hard Wax's biggest customers—he spends a small fortune on vinyl during each visit, either buying new records or replacing those he has given away during gigs. Store manager Torsten—who, in true Hard Wax style, is both serious and rather reticent—estimates that most of Berlin's leading DJs drop by “every one to three weeks” and explains that a number of them can be found on the other side of the counter, too. “In the past, DJ Hell and Electric Indigo worked here,” he writes, via email. At the moment there is DJ Pete (a.k.a. Substance and one half of Scion), [Perlon artist] Cassy, and Marcel Dettmann (who has collaborated with Bpitch's Ben Klock and is a resident at Berghain/Panoramabar).”

It is almost impossible to overstate Hard Wax's importance to Berlin's vast electronic music community, so symbiotic is the relationship between the two. Put simply, without Hard Wax's nearly two decades support of exciting new music, Berlin would be a very different place indeed.

FAVORITE GERMAN WORD?

TORSTEN: “AMITZICH, WHICH MEANS ‘APPROVED BY OFFICIAL AUTHORITIES.’ WE USE IT A LOT FOR [DESCRIBING] DOPE-ASS TRACKS.”

FAVORITE GERMAN EXPRESSION? DANIEL BECKER: “THERE IS AN EAST GERMAN SAYING ‘AUS SCHEISSE, BONBON!’ MEANING ‘CANDY OUT OF SHIT.’ IT DESCRIBES THE ‘90S HERE VERY WELL AND REFLECTS THE DIRTY KIND OF BERLIN HUMOR.”



TRICKSKI

When it comes to creating dancefloor magic, three heads are better than one.

Words Peter Nicholson
Photo Dirk Merten

Trickski's Daniel Becker (left) and Yannick Labbé

Like a dancefloor Cerberus (the three-headed dog that guards the gates of hell) Trickski is a force to be reckoned with. Not many other acts would have the balls to take on a remix of Carl Craig's seminal “At Les,” then complete it in such a way that it earns the master's respect. “It was not intimidating to produce it, since it wasn't meant to be released in the first place,” says Yannick Labbé of the remix.

Trickski member Fna Müller (a.k.a. Jack Migger) remains silent throughout our email interview, perhaps unable to squeeze a word in edgewise between the constant, hilarious keyboard chatter coming from production partners Labbé and Daniel Becker. Or maybe Müller's off perfecting his hip-house dancing or dealing with the business side of being Trickski, which entails producing, remixing, DJing, and running a new series for Sonar Kollektiv called Member of the Trick.

The trio originally coalesced in Berlin around 2001, bonding over Becker's embarrassing love of air drumming, Müller's 5Finger label, and events of questionable taste involving Rainer Trüby's Root Down parties. Following remixes for Slope and Mustang, the “Hormony” single for Compost Records' Black Label, and a compilation of '80s and '90s tracks for Compost's *I Like It* series, Trickski grew into the glittery shoes of superstardom with 2005's *Sweat/Sunshine Fu*k* EP (Sonar Kollektiv). “Sunshine Fu*k” was sleazy, fuzzy

downtempo electro, while “Sweat” was an epic techno journey of keyboard harmonies, tension-building rhythms, and a Detroit warehouse-worthy chorus of “*Gonna make you sweat/Gonna make you work!*” that had Carl Craig squealing in delight when he dropped it into his *Fabric 25* mix. Trickski returns the favor on their *Bat* EP with the aforementioned cover of “At Les” and “Grace,” a slower, ominous number featuring their trademark raw, visceral synths, with a sound the outfit describes as “Grace Jones and [*Apocalypse Now*]'s Colonel Kurtz going wild in the jungle.”

Trickski's music traverses levels of time and space, ranging from dense headphone landscapes to frantic dancefloor numbers. “There are many techno producers that have amazing sounds and energy, but a total lack of melody and harmonies,” says Becker. “On the other hand, there are very good musicians that somehow tend to use cheesy sounds. We try to have the best of both sides. [Plus], it has to be fun!”

www.trickski.org, www.sonarkollektiv.com



FAVORITE GERMAN WORD?
 CHRISTIAN GIERDEN: "IT'S HANS WURST."
 THE TRANSLATION IS SOMETHING LIKE 'JOHN SAUSAGE.'
 IT'S SOME GUY WHO IS SO BLAND AND AVERAGE; HE DOESN'T GET SHIT DONE.
 HE'S ALWAYS JUST HANGING AROUND WAITING FOR SOMETHING TO HAPPEN."

SOCIETY SUCKERS

Society Suckers' Basti (left) and Christian rock out to 2 Unlimited's "Let The Beat Control Your Body"



Maniac music that's equal parts opera and Agnostic Front.

Words Vivian Host
 Photo Jane Stockdale

Though his opera-singer mom despises bass and his orchestra-conductor stepfather thinks his frenetic rhythms are too African-influenced, Christian Gierden's parents still give him tips on how to improve his tracks. "All the things that go *tsk tskk blibblebleb* are just cheap percussion noises to them," says Gierden, who is close, personal friends with onomatopoeia. "They'd rather I elaborate on the melodies more."

Orchestral influences loom large in the music Gierden makes with partner Sebastian "Basti" Sellrich under the name Society Suckers. For instance, "Ode to the Fate of Mankind," from the duo's *Karl Marx Stadt* LP (Lux Nigra), is a scary, dystopian soundscape of exploding breakcore shrapnel and worried C3PO noises with a breakdown of death-knell strings that would make Wagner weep.

"Recently, I found out it's okay if I live out my fantasies of [creating] very elaborate melodic constructions on top of rough-edged things," says Gierden, who has been releasing music as Society Suckers since 1997. He and Sellrich (both 28) are best friends who met at 16 in their hometown of Chemnitz, which was built as a socialist model city (known as Karl Marx Stadt) then subsequently bombed to bits in WWII. "The idea was to make as much noise as we could with 11 seconds [of sample time] and only four channels,"

Gierden recalls of their earliest work. "I was always convinced that you can do anything you want with a very limited setup."

Obsessed with the electronic gabber punk of Atari Teenage Riot, Society Suckers tried several routes to getting their music released, including turning up at now-deceased DHR MC Carl Crack's house in Spandau to give him a demo tape. ("He was very happy that we didn't come at four in the morning like the French free tekno crowd," Gierden remembers.) Eventually, Something J's Kool.Pop label put out their first release, and subsequent slabs of searing breakcore madness followed on M.A.S.H., Peaceoff, and Ad Noiseam.

But if Society Suckers is famous for anything, it's live antics. While Sellrich plays it safe in a mask ("He's terrified people will see him smile," says Gierden), the massive man with a Karl Marx beard is known for screaming and banging his head until he splits it open and bleeds everywhere. In February 2005, Gierden stunned even the most jaded heads at Jason Forrest's Wasted Festival by chugging an entire whiskey bottle with no hands, punching audience members, and spitting in Forrest's face. "I later apologized to Jason," says Gierden, who is very sweet when sober. "He told me 'It's only rock 'n' roll, baby!'"

www.society-suckers.com

Step 1. pull this out
 Step 2. go to Berlin
 Step 3. uncover the secrets of the city

ALLES COOL

SIX INNOVATORS BREAK DOWN THE BASICS OF BERLIN STYLE.
PHOTOS BY JANE STOCKDALE

Jörg Haas

Creative Director of Firmament and
The-Glade.com, publisher of
Beinghunted.com, partner in Stunt Creative
www.am-firmament.com

Where did Jane take your photo? At our store Firmament, in Berlin.

What was playing? Lately I've been listening a lot to drum & bass again (it used to be my favorite in the early 1990s). I must say there are (still) some great tunes floating around.

What's your favorite article of clothing? Past: a pair of rip-stop BDU cargo pants. They have gone and will go everywhere with me. Present (footwear): the Nike Footscape Wovens I'm wearing in this picture (by The Hideout). Future: a Harris Tweed/Gore-Tex duffle coat by Visvim, coming in the fall.

Who is the most stylish person in Berlin? How about the other folks on these pages?

What has the most influence on your style? Quality and comfort—I have been traveling quite a bit recently so it's also important that I can easily maintain the clothing I take with me. Unfortunately, that means less shirts.

Is there a Berlin "look"? Close your eyes, pick any item from your closet, and combine that with at least 10 other pieces. Avoid color-matching. And women: heels at any given time of the day!



Planningtorock

Musician, video maker, artist
www.planningtorock.com

Where did Jane take your photo? In the courtyard of my sound studio in Kreuzberg

What was playing when you got dressed? A new unreleased track by my friend Nyni who lives in London; he's a very talented lad.

What's your favorite article of clothing? My helmets.

Who is the most stylish person in Berlin? Kevin Blechdom

Who has the most influence on your style? Queen Elizabeth I (1533-1603)

Is there a Berlin "look"? Berliners don't tend to spend money on clothes and they hang on to stuff a lot longer, so I'd say the Berlin look is the "personal time-warp" look.



Christoph Martin Linder

Booking agent, label owner, nerd, hardest working man in showbiz

www.planetrock-booking.de

Where did Jane take your photo? This is where I work, in the headquarters of the booking agency Planet Rock. It's based in one of those typical Berlin backyards, right in the heart of the Prenzlauer Berg borough.

What was playing when you got dressed? I guess there was silence. Or probably one of these early-morning *World Series of Poker* reruns on German Sports TV... absolutely addicted to them.

What's your favorite article of clothing? As seen in the picture: a black XXL shirt with the logo of "Bomb Mitte" record label Bomb Mitte on the front side. It was obtained by Pisa73, a graffiti and street artist I highly recommend.

Who is the most stylish person in Berlin? For sure, [it's] Jamie Lidell. Have you ever seen these golden robes he wears in his shows?

Who has the most influence on your style? Mama!

Is there a Berlin "look"? Next question, please. (When I lived in a small town in south Germany some years ago, we used to consider the horrible habit of wearing a mini skirt on top of jeans as the "Berlin look.")



Anje Jager

Illustrator

www.s-l.com

Where did Jane take your photo? In [my] flat.

What was playing? [The sound of] my flatmates, the best sound in our flat.

What's your favorite article of clothing? My Kelly-family trousers, made out of two fan-scarfs, by Vladimir Karaleev.

Who is the most stylish person in Berlin? I think Vladimir and Mariam and all the people working at Apartment are doing pretty well.

What has the most influence on your style? My mood.

Is there a Berlin "look"? Skinny legs in skinny trousers, both male and female.



Christoph Frank and
Tom Büschemann

Platoon cultural development

<http://blog.platoon.org>

Where did Jane take your photo? At the Platoon headquarters in Mitte.

What was playing when you got dressed? Modeselektor

What's your favorite article of clothing? Original army pants from 1951.

Who is the most stylish person in Berlin? Let's tell the truth, there is no one.

What has the most influence on your style? Everything around the combat!

Is there a Berlin "look"? Definitely not. Just smile... because you look good.



Vladimir Karaleev

Fashion designer

www.vladimirkaraleev.com

Where did Jane take your photo? At the Berlin Festival.

What was playing? Some loud hip-hop classics, I guess.

What's your favorite article of clothing? A pair of acid wash jeans I found in a thrift shop. Acid wash is something nobody does anymore, so it's really valuable to me.

Who is the most stylish person in Berlin? My good friend Mariam; she has one of the most incredible styles in Berlin. She is always so chic and daring.

What has the most influence on your style? Right now I am totally influenced by the early '90s style; I am really into it. The early rave look, the '90s cheap Euro-trash street style, the '80s hip-hop ghetto style... totally obsessed with the Rayban Wayfarer sunglasses.

Is there a Berlin "look"? The "anything goes"/comfortable look. [There's] too much street style; Berlin needs a little style makeover.

FAVORITE GERMAN WORD?
KEVIN BLECHDOM: "MUSCHI (PRONOUNCED LIKE "MUSHY"), WHICH MEANS 'PUSSY.'
I COMPLAINED ONCE AT A RESTAURANT THAT THE FOOD WAS TOO MUSHY,
AND I GOT A VERY STRANGE RESPONSE BECAUSE I HAD SAID, 'THE FOOD IS A PUSSY.'"

FAR FROM HOME

Cheap rent, green parks, all-night clubs, Lenin statues, a broken wall, and doggy welfare. North American expatriates reflect on life in Berlin.

Words Cameron Macdonald
Illustrations Slang International

Generations of North American eyes have viewed Berlin as a paradise. The romance was there in the Roaring 'Twenties, amidst the clatter of glasses, laughter, and brassy horns of the city's speakeasies and cabarets. During harder times, Berlin's West became an Eden worth risking one's life to escape to.

Years after the masses' optimistic hands took down the Wall, and Loveparade flooded the streets with millions of bohemian revelers, the rent is still dirt cheap, many clubs are open all night long, and nimble artists can scrape by without holding down a "real" job. Paradise, my friend. Paradise.

In the past few years, Berlin has reeled in many American and Canadian artists, DJs, hipsters, and bohos. Techno mavens like Richie Hawtin, Daniel Bell, and A Guy Called Gerald took residence there, along with rapper Fat Jon of Five Deez and post-techno explorers and iconoclasts like Andrew Pekler, Khan, and Kevin Blechdom. Like Los Angeles, Barcelona, and Brooklyn's Williamsburg district, the media has portrayed Berlin as an enclave for expatriate artists.

But not all of them are simply trend-following lemmings; many North American Berliners moved to the German capital for a change of pace, either financially, socially, or politically. Stewart Walker, the formerly Boston-based minimal techno producer who moved there in 2003, saw the city as a relief. "Somebody told me recently that Berlin is how New York would be if all of the professionals got up and left, and only the artists remained," he recounts. "That's a simplification, but it still excites me."

Hawtin, who has called England, Canada, and New York home, explains that he wanted to reconnect with his European roots and live in a different, but comfortable place. "I left my car three years ago in Canada and traded it in for my bicycle," he says. "The neighborhoods, people hanging out, walking around—the city is alive, unlike most automobile-driven North American cities."

Of course, "cheap" is the golden word to many artists seeking to eke out a modest living. Most pay a smidgen of what they might in New York or San Francisco for apartments twice the size.

"I pay more than the average artist in Berlin, because I chose to have a renovated apartment in a nice, tree-lined

FAVORITE GERMAN EXPRESSION?
RICHIE HAWTIN: "FAST NIGHTS. [A NEW MINIMALIST ART MOVEMENT WHOSE NAME LITERALLY] MEANS 'ALMOST NOTHING'"

FAVORITE GERMAN WORD?
STEWART WALKER: "THE FAR-OUT NAMES OF GERMAN GIRLS: HEIKE, ULRIKE, MECHTILD, IRMGARD, GESINE, AND KONSTANZA. SO PERCUSSIVE AND BEAUTIFUL."

neighborhood," says Walker. "But the benefit of Berlin is that you *can* pay around €200 (about \$260) a month for a good-sized apartment. They are rare, but still available," he notes, adding that they're often coal-heated. For just €400 a month, techno experimentalist and California native Andrew Pekler is kicking back in a centrally located, 900-square-foot flat with hardwood floors and a balcony.

Walker argues that many of Berlin's ongoing urban troubles have benefited artists from abroad. "The problems that vex the general population are what allow the immigrating artist population to thrive," he notes, "[Like] a bankrupt city government, no jobs, too much space, cheap rents, confusion over land rights, etcetera."

As ex-Oakland, CA resident Kevin Blechdom puts it, "[Almost] everyone is really poor, but are doing what they want to do."

Paradise, right? But do American artists just up and move, and show up at a club ready for work?

"Europe is pretty accommodating when it comes to accepting artists from America," says Walker. "I have a residence/artist visa, which allows me to live here but specifically precludes me from getting a job. But earning money as a performer is allowed. The main requirements are that I

maintain health insurance, earn an income, and pay tax on it."

Pekler applied for, and received, permanent-resident status through Berlin's Culture Ministry. "Basically, I had to show that I was an artist with professional contacts to record companies in Berlin," he explains.

Of course, those connections don't get you health care (which all native and naturalized Germans are provided; outsiders are required to get it themselves). "Germany is quite socialist when it comes to maintaining a social safety net," informs Walker. "There's lots of squatters who receive 'the dole,' and we always laugh about how, if you're jobless, you can also get a stipend for each dog you have."

But there's more to it than money, despite the scarcity of day jobs and the frequent need to hustle. Berlin's communities are music- and art-heavy; less the scenester-ruled places that the US offers. "One can participate here and there and yet remain fairly anonymous, without going through the networking vortex that seems prevalent in scenes elsewhere," says Pekler.

But it doesn't work out for everyone. Matthew Curry (a.k.a. Safety Scissors) briefly lived in Berlin because he felt artistically encouraged by the city's "openness," but much of the music got to him after awhile and he chose to move back to San Francisco.

"I did eventually realize that there was a lot of monotony in the clubs, and the everlasting techno times did get a bit grating," he says. "Maybe I just missed San Francisco, but I surely noticed a lack of grit and more song elements in the music. Those things missing in the predominant Berlin scene became more important in my music."

Naturally, barriers still abound for North Americans in Berlin: everything from learning German to enduring long,

depressing winters to attempting to create cell phone accounts (companies often demand proof of residency). But where posters of Dubya catch more darts than dartboards do, sometimes they've got bigger problems. Drunks ("and Canadians," Blechdom notes) often hassle Americans for being "ignorant Yankees."

"My reaction is usually just sarcasm, you know, 'Ooh, you're so political!'" Walker laughs. "They don't usually know more than the people they're trying to insult. I've had people tell me with a straight face [that] they don't need to visit America to be an authority on its problems."

Perhaps it's the exception more than the rule, but the city's Cold War past and old division of East and West is still present in the streets; it's only been 16 years since Germany was reunified. A few stops on the metro can take you to an entirely different city within Berlin, one of decaying Communist-built structures, a recently restored, 30-foot-tall bust of Lenin, and the "Plattenbauten" on Karl Marx Allee, a famous prefab proletarian housing development designed just like those in Warsaw and Moscow. To many former East Germans, communities were stronger and people were more altruistic during the Communist era, says Walker. "There was no monetary one-upmanship, only friends and family, and work and vacation."

Those ideas of community haven't died entirely, though—they're what folks like Hawtin relocated for: a strong sense of safety and a tremendous feeling of life in the streets. "You go out on the streets, walking around at night, without having to worry about much. Sometimes you are coming home from the club at 5 a.m. on your bike and the streets are still busy with people walking, riding, and hanging," he texts *XLR8R*, while sitting in one of the city's many parks. "It's just different, and sometimes hard to explain."

THE TRANSPLANTS

A SHORT LIST OF OTHER NOTABLE EXPATS IN BERLIN.

DAN BELL (US)
The Midwestern king of minimal, tracky techno, DBX plays often around the city at Watergate and Panoramabar.
www.daniel-bell.com

JEREMY CAULFIELD (CAN)
Since 2003, this Toronto DJ/producer has run his cheeky techno label Dumb-Unit from Friedrichshain with the help of Exercise One's Ingo Gansera.
www.dumb-unit.com

JASON FORREST (US)
From South Carolina (via NYC), Cock Rock Disco's prog rock/breakcore fusionist moved to Berlin two years ago; he's since taken the Jason Forrest Band and integrated himself via his wild two-day Wasted Festival.
www.cockrockdisco.com

JAY HAZE (US)
This eclectic Philadelphian (born Justin McNulty) sold LSD at Grateful Dead shows and lived on the streets of San Francisco before becoming one of the most in-demand names in microhouse via his Contexterrior label. He is half of retro acid house project Fuckpony.
www.jayhaze.com

KIM HIORTHØY (NOR)
Once based in Oslo, this lo-fi electronic experimentalist, filmmaker, and graphic artist (he designs sleeves for Rune Grammofon) calls Berlin home.
www.smalltownsupersound.com

LIARS (US)
February 2006's *Drum's Not Dead* (Mute) from these former-NYC art-rockers was inspired partially by the tumultuous emotions bandleader Angus Andrew experienced upon moving.
www.liarsliarsliars.com

EWAN PEARSON (UK)
It was quite a coup when the affable electro-house producer/remixer recently took a high-profile slot at the Loveparade 2006.
www.ewanpearson.com

MATT SHADETEK (US)
The only American member of Jammer's grime crew Neckle Camp, Matt transatlantically recorded Team Shadetek's *Pale Fire* (Sound-Ink) with NYC partner Zack.
www.wearchangeagent.com/shadeblog

VLADISLAV DELAY (FIN)
Click-house veteran Luomo runs his Huume label from the capital, where he lives with on-off girlfriend, techno producer Antye Greie-Fuchs.
www.vladislavdelay.com

STEVE BUG

Beats and bleeps that burrow under your skin.

Words Peter Nicholson
Photo Dirk Merten

You know when you've got roaches in your apartment and you just can't get rid of them? Producer, DJ, and label boss Steve Bug is a bit like that—always lurking around the edges of dance music, popping up to drop a bomb from his Poker Flat label (like the dark, crispy distortion of "Shick," a recent collaboration with Matthias Tanzmann), lay down a DJ set full of devastatingly long fades at Cocoon in Ibiza, or deliver the latest installment of his *Bugnology* series, software-enabled compilations of minimal-and tech-house. Bug is much more welcome than his six-legged counterparts, but he's just as indestructible—and impervious to current trends.

That's not to say the Berliner doesn't appreciate the finer things in life—got to love a DJ who cites avant-garde Spanish restaurant El Bullí as an inspiration for his music. He also recently moved to a quiet street in Berlin's upscale Mitte neighborhood and his favorite tippie while working on tunes is... green tea. It's a bit hard to reconcile this staid existence with his

burbling, menacing tracks (like "Smackman," which anchors the middle portion of *Bugnology 2*).

Perhaps a bit of quiet is just Bug's key to holding things down. After getting his start behind the decks at a small Ibiza bar in 1991, he built his reputation in hometown Bremen before releasing his first tracks in 1993; three years later, he started his Raw Elements label. Today, in addition to a constant flurry of DJ gigs and producing his own recordings, Bug runs three successful imprints—minimal/tech-house outpost Audiomatique, deep house label Dessous, and Poker Flat, Bug's best-known label, with over 70 singles and nearly 20 albums in its catalog.

Witness to the massive changes that have occurred in German dance music in the past dozen years, Bug has the somewhat jaded outlook of a survivor. "After the big trance and hard techno years in the '90s, clubs got smaller again and people finally opened up to other music again—it was possible to play deep house, house, electro, and Detroit techno in the same set. Unfortunately, a lot of people are not as open-minded anymore; they only want to listen to minimal stuff and everything apart from that is not cool enough for them." A victim of his own sound's success? Hardly. Bug may scuttle undercover for a moment or two, but he's sure to resurface. Get your shoe(s) ready.

Bugnology 2 is out now on Poker Flat. www.pokerflat-recordings.com

FAVORITE GERMAN EXPRESSION? "KABEL SALAD, IT MEANS SOME CABLES ARE STUCK TOGETHER AND HAVE KNOTS SO YOU CAN'T GET THEM SEPARATED."



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DIXON

Bringing house heads to their knees, one deep cut after another.

Words Joshua P. Ferguson
Photo Stefan Korte

Steffen Berkhahn, known to the world simply as Dixon, is feeling good. His Innervisions label is only a year old and its second release, *Âme's Rej* EP, is already an international hit; after selling thousands worldwide, it was just licensed by Defected for re-release this fall with new remixes.

This is no overnight success story, though. Berkhahn started in the electronic music business in the early '90s, throwing parties with breakcore pioneer Alec Empire (of Atari Teenage Riot). "This was at a time in dance music [when] the tempo was nearly the same for all types of electronic music," he clarifies. "You could play house or techno tracks in a drum & bass context. So I did." As the most soulful member of the outfit, Berkhahn soon felt a call to greener pastures.

Branching out into remix work, his first commission came about through a friendship with Jazzanova's Alex Barck, who garnered him a remix for Sonar Kollektiv in '99. Its success led to a fruitful seven-year relationship with the label, one that led to the production project Wahoo (with Georg Levin) and the launch of Innervisions (which recently split from the SK stable).

"Sonar Kollektiv is a high-quality label but I felt it released so much different music that some [artists] didn't get the attention they deserved," Berkhahn says. "I wanted to change that." Now seven releases deep, Innervisions is getting plenty of attention. Taking Berkhahn's love of deep house and fusing it with electro and techno, its sound fills a dance-music void, and contributions from Franck Roger, Chateau Flight, and Henrik Schwarz are quickly making it into a brand DJs trust. "The label is what comes about when you listen to house for 14 years," Berkhahn offers.

Innervisions could easily rest on the success of *Rej*, but Berkhahn keeps looking forward. "We try not to focus on [*Rej's*] success," he says. "It's a record we released that we loved, and that's it." He continues to step up the output; this fall, he will drop a full-length CD of singles and exclusive tracks and a 12" from Stefan Goldman that includes a remix by *Âme*. Dixon is feeling especially good about the latter; "I have feeling it's going to be the *Rej* of 2006," he whispers.

www.innervisions.com

FAVORITE GERMAN WORD?
"GROOVE," 'CAUSE THE GERMAN THESAURUS HAS NO EXPLANATION FOR IT,
BUT WE GERMANS USE IT."



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SLEEPARCHIVE

Techno reductionist Roger Semsroth knows how to keep a secret.

Words David Hemingway
Photo Dirk Merten

"808 and bleeps and noise" is how Berlin's Roger Semsroth succinctly describes his perfectly formed Sleeparchive project. Combining the asceticism of Mika Vainio's recordings for Sähkö with the aestheticism of near-mythological labels like Basic Channel, Semsroth's releases acquire power from their musical and visual reductionism. His debut EP, *Elephant Island*, was so stripped down as to fuel rumors that it was a collaboration between Pan Sonic's Vainio and Richie Hawtin; a subsequent series of cherishable releases, hand-printed with identical stamps and catalog numbers that read "zzz," further added to the mystery.

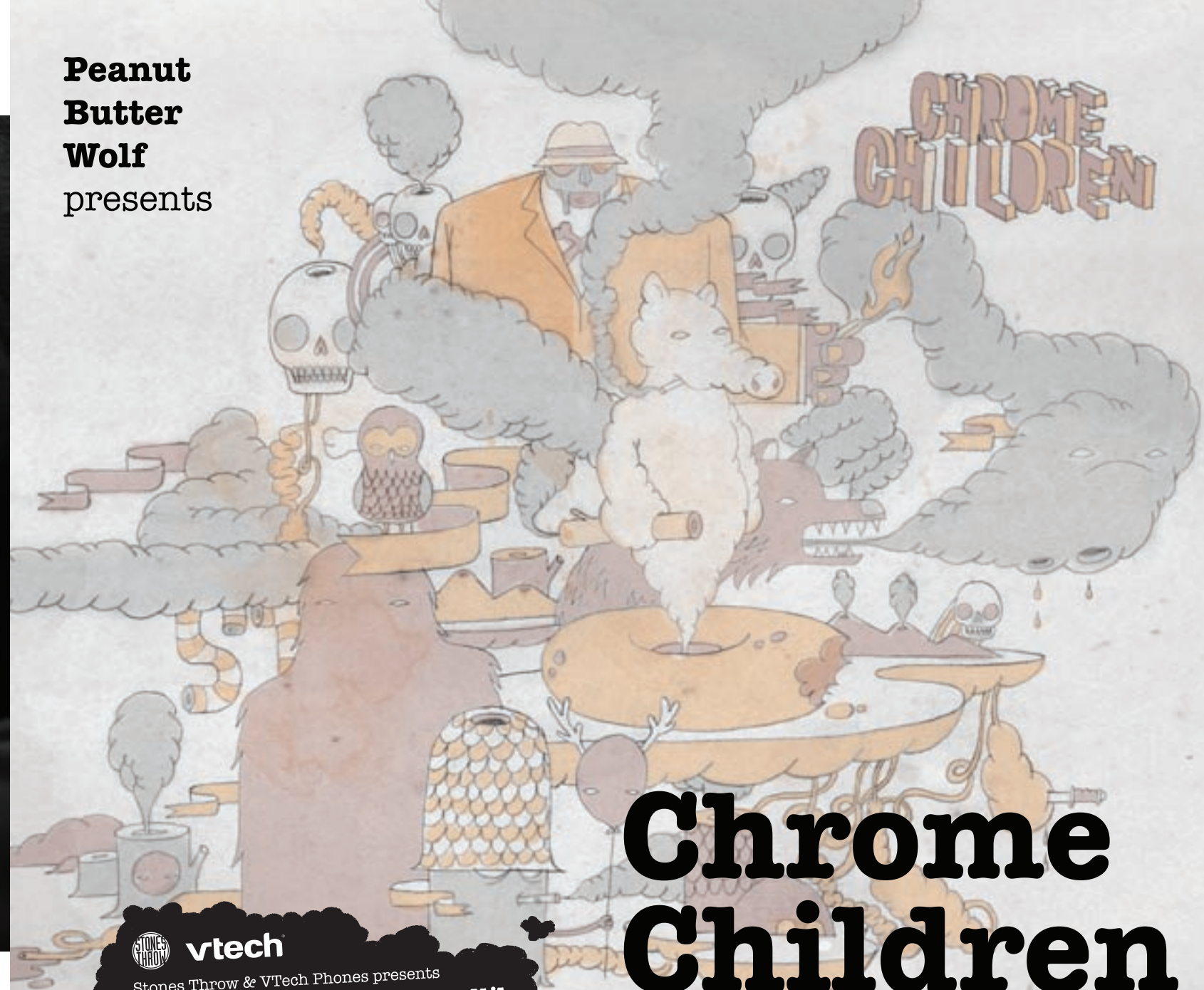
A conversation with Semsroth confirms that Sleeparchive is not only his own recording moniker and label name; it also brands the work of a number of collaborators. "Sleeparchive is the name for everything that is coming out [on the Sleeparchive label]," he says. "Most are made by me but there are also tracks made by [four other] friends. They don't want to use their names. We have to keep it a secret."

Curiously, given the dexterity with which he works the genre's palette, Semsroth is credited with having said he doesn't actually like minimal techno. "Maybe this was a misunderstanding," he muses. "Minimal music is actually my first love. It's true that I'm not such a big fan of the music that is called 'minimal techno' nowadays. That's not because I think it's not 'real' minimal—it's just not the music I listen to at home and this is the main reason I buy records."

Given Sleeparchive's strange austerity and isolationist bent, it's easy to envisage Semsroth as cut off from Berlin's music scene and its coterie of music makers. "It's true that I'm not as involved as other Berlin-based artists but I'm not isolated or more independent," he counters. "I'm just not the type of person who parties for 48 hours every weekend. I hang out with my friends; some of them are artists, some are not. Sometimes we go out, sometimes we just have a beer at home."

www.sleeparchive.de

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- Fri, Oct. 20 - Berbatis Pan, **Portland OR**
- Sat, Oct. 21 - Richards on Richards, **Vancouver BC**
- Sun, Oct. 22 - Neumos, **Seattle WA**
- Tue, Oct. 24 - Urban Lounge, **Salt Lake City UT**
- Wed, Oct. 25 - Cervantes Master. Ballrm., **Denver CO**
- Fri, Oct. 27 - Triple Rock Club, **Minneapolis MN**
- Sat, Oct. 28 - Metro, **Chicago IL**
- Sun, Oct. 29 - Magic Stick, **Detroit MI**
- Mon, Oct. 30 - Phoenix Concert Thtr., **Toronto ON**
- Tue, Oct. 31 - Le National, **Montreal QC**
- Wed, Nov. 1 - Paradise, **Boston MA**
- Thu, Nov. 2 - BB Kings, **New York NY**
- Sat, Nov. 4 - Starlite, **Philadelphia PA**
- Sun, Nov. 5 - Sonar, **Baltimore MD**

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[adult swim]

NU-DUB ALLSTARS

Out of the ashes of soundsystem culture, a group of low-end fiends form a new family.

Words Matt Earp
Images Pfadfinderei.com

Berlin's nu-dub scene: Its lineage can be hard to trace, but it involves members of groups The Tape, Al Haca, Tolcha, and Jahcoozi, as well as sometime collaborators like Stereotyp, Modeselektor, Data MC, and DJ Maxximus. A tight-knit gang, these musicians ride the rough edges where hip-hop, glitch, dub, electro, and pop intersect, making waves in Europe and beyond. Their sound has grown throughout '05 and '06, with the release of The Tape's *Autoreverse* and Jahcoozi's *Pure Bred Mongrel* (both on Berlin's Kitty-Yo) and Stereotyp vs. Al Haca's *Phase Three* (on Vienna's Klein label). While new records are shopped around for 2007, *XL88R* snagged a chat with The Tape/Al Haca MC RQM, Shir Khan (DJ, Meta-Polyp label owner, and Tolcha producer), Jahcoozi bassist Oren Gerlitz, and Jahcoozi vocalist Sasha Perera.

What brought you to the city and what made you stay here?

Oren: I came randomly, just wanting to move out of Tel Aviv, wanting to be in an environment that would let me experiment more musically... I met Sasha in the first week here, and Robert [Koch, The Tape and Jahcoozi's producer] the second month.

Sasha: I was running away from London. I'd actually studied German Politics in school and the only thing I took from that was being able to speak German. But basically I was really into partying at the time, around 2001, and Berlin was the city with capital letters saying 'RAVE.' When I got here, I saw everyone was making music anyway and it was really easy to try stuff out here and not be self-conscious about it. Studio space is cheap and it's not like London where time is money and it better be a good song otherwise it's not even worth recording it. I had never even tried much as a vocalist 'til I got here.

RQM: A girl kidnapped me from New York and brought me here... and I really loved the Jazzanova remixes—those kind of shuffling, quick, four-bar changes—and I thought it would be a cool thing to do hip-hop over. All the beats in the States were really backwards back then, just MPC loops and heavy snares in everything; for someone to have 200 snares in a track and just shift up the changes in the beat every four bars was amazing to me. So I went to the Sonar Kollektiv offices with some shitty demo I had and Christian [Schwanz from Al Haca] was there, rolling up weed at 12 o'clock. He came over to my house, we swapped CDs,

and that's how it started. From that, Stereotyp and everything else followed, and then I lived underneath Oren 'cause my girl threw me out of her house!

And since that time you've all been working together in different combinations?

RQM: For sure! This is like family: We eat together, we do laundry together... we try and survive winter depressions in Berlin together. Six months out of the year it's always dark. During the summer no one wants to do anything but during the winter you just sit over a beat, fixing little details; everybody's producing, and that's why everything sounds the way it does. Everything's tweaked out and dark and cool.

What's the musical thread that holds the family together?

RQM: Bass. Details in productions. More bounce.
Oren: Bass-heavy music, centered on the dancefloor. There's a little dub in it and a little influence from grime but it's all more mixed. The beats come out of two-step or hip-hop, and even maybe techno—because it's Berlin, that feel comes through as well. All together, it makes something that could be described as blip-hop or...

RQM: Grime-bleep.

Oren: ...tech ragga, bleep ragga.

RQM: One thing I've learned going between Vienna [where Christian of Al Haca and Stereotyp live] and here is that the music made in Berlin is cooler in temperature. It's the same sounds they make in Vienna but it's more cold, techno-y, darker. In Vienna, it's warmer somehow. Even if it's just a grizzly bassline, it's more analog, more round, less techno...

What about dub and reggae? Jahcoozi, there's clearly a pun in there, and there's definitely a thriving reggae/dancehall scene in Berlin. Do you guys interact with that?

Sasha: Well, the problem with a lot of the dancehall



SHIR KHAN



JAHCOOZI

JOHN DEERE

FAVORITE GERMAN EXPRESSION?
 RQM: "ALTER, WAS GUCKST DU!?"
 IT BASICALLY MEANS "WHAT YOU LOOKING AT, MOTHERFUCKER?!"
 ALTHOUGH ALTER MEANS SOMETHING MORE ENDEARING, LIKE 'SON' OR 'FAM.'

scene is that they play really poppy stuff here. If you go to see Such-a-Sound and the Yaam club, it's all kind of... nice; maybe not dark enough for me. It's like a hit machine—if you go regularly, you'll hear the same tracks over and over again.

RQM: Al Haca faced so many problems with this because we came from soundsystem culture. After the record came out, a lot of the bookings were at dancehall events and dudes would just run up and say, "Can you play Sizzla?" Even if we were playing our style of dancehall, even with Sizzla over the top of these digital beats, they wouldn't have it.

Shir Khan: This is why I completely escaped from the hip-hop/dancehall/reggae scene as a DJ. If you wanted to play upfront hip-hop or electronica, you had to play it at an electro or techno party. We're in between, so even if some of the music we do is dancefloor-intended, some isn't. It's not that easy to spread the sound here in Berlin, even if it is a Berlin sound.

Everyone I talk to has a story about how Berlin is not the way it used to be, that you can't do the things here that you once could. Are you guys still excited about being here?

RQM: I came quite late, four years ago, so I didn't feel this big change. I missed this whole idea of people just being able to break into [abandoned] apartments and just take [them] over, and I think if I came from those times I'd be like, 'Hell yeah, this sucks.' But I'm just happy to see the music scene grow and how all these projects that are around me are developing.

Sasha: I guess if you're looking for some wonderland, some unique artist haven, you're gonna be disappointed. But I still think you do a lot better to make music here than you do in a lot of other cities... Your money just goes further. You can work in a bar three days a week and still not die.

Shir Khan: I'm the only person here who was born in Berlin and to me it's not depressing or repressive. After the Wall came down every week there was this underground, illegal cellar club that was really interesting for me. I mean, I was 13 years old, so it was also my first time going out. Now it's definitely getting a little more chic but still there's so much stuff happening. And, always, the people who are coming here are quite enthusiastic; they come and they want to do something. So I don't think it's dying; it's a natural process. Everything's getting commercialized but Berlin is so big that there will always be certain niches for underground art—it's the best city for this in the world.

Visit this crew on the web at www.al-haca.de, www.dj-shirkhan.de, www.jahcoozi.com, www.thetape.de, www.metapolyp.de, www.tolcha.de, and all over Myspace.



THE TAPE AND RQM

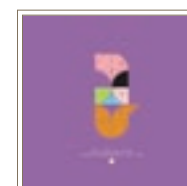
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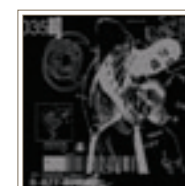
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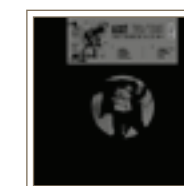
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PANORAMABAR

The life and times of Berlin's craziest underground mega-club.

Words Vivian Host
Photo Northor

/BERGHAIN

It's noon on a sunny Sunday. While half of Berlin sits down to brunch, this is the first time some of these people have sat down all weekend. Six shirtless men who look like Russian G.I. Joe figures—matching boots, crew cuts, and grey acid-wash jeans—rest against one another; next to them, a group of exiled Detroit ravers share a cigarette and three German girls loll on perfectly manicured grass, laughing. The whole effect is one of falling down the rabbit hole, only to end up in an adult raver's paradise.

This courtyard is just one part of the grand, surreal labyrinth of one of the world's most amazing clubs, Panoramabar/Berghain. Built in an abandoned power station from the 1950s, its heavy concrete walls contain three floors of true mayhem. You enter to the pounding techno of the dark, brooding Berghain (so named because the building lies on the Kreuzberg/Friedrichshain border), then ascend a flight of stairs

to Panoramabar, where seasoned clubbers break serious sweats to tweaky minimal and techy house, dancing underneath gigantic Wolfgang Tillmans genitalia photos and windows that look out over East Berlin. The hardcore descend from the already devious Berghain into The Laboratory, a gay sex club in the basement.

Panoramabar has a no-idiots door policy; other than that, it's utterly democratic: there's no special guestlist line, no VIP rooms, and no cameras are allowed. The idea is to create a safe space where everyone feels comfortable to do as they please. It's the mantra of the club's founders (who wish to remain nameless), one that has followed them from their start as gay fetish-party promoters through their heyday as the creators of Ostgut, a wildly popular East Berlin club that ran from 1995 through 1999.

Panoramabar may be a mega-club, but it doesn't

act like one. It has no corporate sponsors, no logos, and it's hidden down an unmarked driveway. Though it's promoted, it still feels like a secret. Furthermore, its adventurous lineups have slotted dance-punk band The Gossip, grime DJ Skream, and Chicago stalwart DJ Traxx amongst regulars like Luciano, Khan, and Sammy Dee.

You can hear the club's sound via the club's new Ostgut label, but there's no substitute for experiencing Panoramabar yourself. "It's the most intense place I have ever played," says resident Prosumer. "The crowd is wild, open-minded, and willing to party. Sometimes, I am so moved spinning there that I get tears in my eyes."

Panoramabar 01: Cassy (Ostgut) is out now.
www.berghain.de, www.ostgut.de/ton

FAVORITE GERMAN WORD OR EXPRESSION?
RESIDENT DJ CASSY: "FOTZE, WHICH MEANS 'CUNT.'"
RESIDENT DJ NICK HÖPPNER (PLAYHOUSE): "SCHMINKE, WHICH MEANS 'MAKE-UP.'"
PANORAMA FOUNDERS: "ALTER SCHWEDE! IT'S USED LIKE 'OH MY GOD!' BUT IT LITERALLY MEANS 'OLD SWEDE!' AND FISCHBLASE, WHICH MEANS 'FISH BLADDER.'"

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MAROK

A graphic design powerhouse lets the layouts speak for themselves.

Words Vivian Host
Photo Dirk Merten

FAVORITE GERMAN WORD? "BLITZKRIEG. NOBODY IN GERMANY EVER SAYS IT, BUT IT'S FUNNY TO ME THAT IT'S ALWAYS USED IN AMERICAN HEADLINES."

Track down elusive *Lodown* editor Marok (born Thomas Marecki) in a non-descript Kreuzberg building that houses the magazine's office. His desk is in the back of the room, behind a floor-to-ceiling bookcase that houses all 52 issues of the magazine, plus a predictable collection of limited-edition vinyl toys and limited-run books. Rangy and tan, with watery blue eyes and a weathered look that bespeaks years of board sports, 34-year-old Marok very much resembles a much quieter version of Tony Hawk. He's known for answering questions with no more than one carefully measured sentence.

A similar economy can be found in his design, which mixes sharp photos and clever fonts with the odd well-timed slogan ("Fill your culture with content," "We shall overcome mediocrity"). Marok makes the street/skate lifestyle look classy; eschewing anything over-the-top, he's like a puppet master, gently pulling strings and creating magical backdrops while generally trying to keep himself as invisible as possible. "I would rather go abstract in thinking about type or patterns," he explains. "I'm not a big fan of illustrations unless they really have something to say."

Born and raised in the Wilmersdorf district of West Berlin, Marok spent his teens tagging, listening to

Hieroglyphics, reading *Thrasher*, and skating in baggy Droors shorts—in other words, consumed by the American underground lifestyle of the '80s. Having a graphic designer for a father, he honed his aesthetic early on, then got a graphic design degree; but the turning point was a half-year spent in San Diego, CA, where he was surrounded by his surf and skate idols and the groundbreaking layouts of former *Transworld* art director/*RayGun* founder David Carson.

Returning to Berlin, he printed up 3,000 issues of the 48-page, full-color *Lodown* #1, which covered street skating, BMX, fashion, and music in German and English. "In the '90s, it was all about special layouts," recalls Marok. "I was just trying to fuck up the grid system as hard as I could. In the beginning, we were so idealistic. Any company we didn't think was cool, we wouldn't accept their ads. We stuck

with this, and it worked for us."

Following issue #50, Marok turned over *Lodown*'s design to guests (Berlin's Studio Anti and Floor 5, and the tag-team of Don Pendleton and Matt Irving) to concentrate on other projects—such as the gigantic silkscreens about "the collapse of traffic" he's just done for a gallery in Copenhagen. When pressed for sage words of wisdom for the young'uns, he demurs. "I can't really give any advice, except persistence—follow what you believe in."

www.lodownmagazine.com, www.marok.info



WWW.AIRPUSHERSMUSIC.COM



ANJA SCHNEIDER

Mobilee label head makes maximal moves.

Words Philip Sherburne
Photo Ingo Robin

It's somewhere in the wee hours at Barcelona's Raum club, and Anja Schneider helms the turntables, grinning ear to ear. She has reason to smile: tonight's party, a pre-Sónar showcase for her Mobilee imprint, is packed wall-to-wall and going wild. The fledgling label is less than two years and two dozen releases old, and none of its artists are household names, even for die-hard techno insiders; nevertheless it's built its rep—as one of the bright lights of the new generation of “minimal”—into a pretty maximal buzz. While the minimal backlash may be swinging into action faster than you can say “skippy hi-hat,” Schneider's banging track selection and lickety-split mixing moots the whole debate. Call it what you like; this is techno, the way it's always been, the way it's meant to be.

While Mobilee may still be in diapers, Schneider is no newcomer. In the '90s, she cut her teeth in various German marketing firms, brokering truces between lifestyle brands and the country's then-booming rave scene, and developed special features for Berlin's KISS FM and Fritz Loveradio. In 2000, she leapt out of the cubicle and into the radio announcer's booth, launching a Saturday night show on Fritz called “Dance Under the Blue Moon.” The program has become the unofficial pre-party soundtrack for thousands of Berlin clubbers and proven Schneider to be quite the tastemaker, hosting artists like Guido Schneider, Luciano, Matt John, and Jennifer Cardini just as their careers were taking off.

From there, it was a short jump to club residencies at Watergate and WMF, and to Schneider launching her own label. (Her partner, Ralf Kollmann, handles marketing and promotional duties, but both stress that Mobilee is her baby, from its vision to her canny A&R decisions.) Despite the depths of her little black book, Schneider didn't rely on established names to build the label's profile; Mobilee was founded, and remains, as a platform for emerging talent.

You wouldn't expect such a restless personality to sit out the best part of the process, and she hasn't. In 2004 and 2005, abetted by Sebo K, Schneider recorded two tracks for PIAS; by Mobilee's third release, Schneider and Sebo K's “Rancho Relaxo” single, the duo had proved itself a formidable force. The monster track perfectly encapsulates Mobilee's approach, fusing nimble rhythms with stadium-sized rave sirens. With the label at 14 releases and counting, every one of them a snapshot of the vanguard of Berlin techno, Mobilee—living up to its name—keeps on moving.

A double-CD compilation of Mobilee tracks, *Back To Back*, is out on October 6.
www.mobilee-records.de

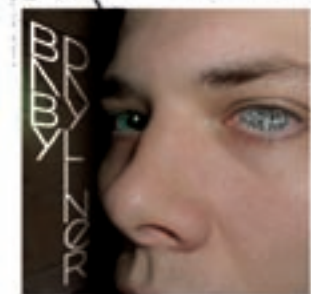
FAVORITE GERMAN WORD?
“WUZZELBUD, WHICH IS THE NAME OF THE LP OF ROBAG WHRUME.
NOBODY KNOWS EXACTLY WHAT IT MEANS EXCEPT HIM,
BUT IT SOUNDS GOOD AND IT MEANS EVERYTHING TO ME.
I LOVE IT.”



SYBARITE
Cut Out Shape
The long-overdue return of Sybarite is a stunner, rivaling the finer moments of Four Tet, Sigur Rós, Tortoise, Mouse on Mars and The Notwit.



+/-
Let's Build A Fire
Pitchfork, on their last album: “...any one day inherit the [Disemberment]. Plan's crown as champions of the pop periphery, if only they sandpaper their edges and stick to their guns.” They've done it now.



BABY DAYLINER
Critics Pass Away
JLR&R calls it “his near-perfect second album.” Music for Robots says it's one of 2006's best! On tour in October with Mobius Band & The National.



120 DAYS
120 Days
Norway's 120 Days look toward a new dawn of electronic rock: built by vintage keyboards, powered by guitars, colored by drones and noise, and propelled by a motorik beat synched with Kraftwerk and NIT.



HIGH TECH SOUL
The Creation Of Techno Music
The first film to tackle the deep roots of techno music and the city that spawned it: Detroit. With Juan Atkins, Derrick May, Kevin Saunderson and many more.



TRISTEZA
En Nuestro Desafío
The nine brand-new tracks on the CD find Tristeza in an ambient base rolling along dubbed-out bass-lines and abstract compositions. The DVD contains a 30-minute tour film and the video for “Stumble On Air” from *A Colors*.



HYPATIA LAKE
...And We Shall Call Him Joseph
Meet Joseph Bigby, one of the leaders of the candy-factory rebellion in - and by - Hypatia Lake, and listen to concept-rock blow up.
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JUSTICE
Waters Of Nazareth
Coming on strong with an unholy techno thunder, Paris's Justice rocked dancefloors with their remixes of Daft Punk, DFA1979 and Franz Ferdinand. Their first EP features the monstrous title track “Waters of Nazareth.”

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OCEAN

Thomas Fehlmann and Gudrun Gut explore uncharted waters.

CLUB

Words James Jung
Photo Dirk Merten

Berlin shot through the electronic music ranks during the first half of the decade, rising from vibrant outpost to the scene's global epicenter. With a tight-knit community of producers and labels, it suddenly seemed like every digitized beat emanated from the once-divided city.

But a moment is never just an isolated moment, and there's always a backstory explaining how all the right elements coalesced. In Berlin's case, an important part of this story revolves around the Ocean Club. A collaborative effort of longtime scene stalwarts Gudrun Gut and Thomas Fehlmann, the Ocean Club has—at various times during its 10-year history—encompassed a weekly party, a Friday night radio program, a groundbreaking concert-hall series, and even a state-sponsored record fair. As a result of their far-reaching influence, Gut and Fehlmann have garnered a reputation as not only instigators within Berlin's scene, but also global ambassadors of the city's sound.

While Gut and Fehlmann were exposed to one another's music in the '80s—via their involvement in fevered post-punk band Malaria and quirky no wave act Palais Schaumburg, respectively—the pair weren't properly introduced until the mid-'90s. Fehlmann was already an established player, having collaborated with Dr. Alex Patterson as part of The Orb and Juan Atkins as part of Detroit-Berlin super group 3MB. Gut was new to techno; tired of the formal structures imposed by bands, she had abandoned rock in 1994 in favor of experimenting with electronic bass loops. Though she enjoyed the liberties of being a solo artist, Gut missed playing music with other people. Once her crude loops evolved into fully realized tracks, she jumped at the chance to collaborate with friends on what would later become her elec-

tronic debut, 1996's *Members of the Ocean Club*.

That same year, famed techno club Tresor invited the burgeoning Ocean Club to throw a weekly Sunday night soirée in their downstairs lounge. "We made the room all up in gold and lots of little fish," Gut recalls fondly. "We started with resident DJ Chica Paula, live sets by Sun Electric, and had a mermaid tending bar!"

Fehlmann is quick to remark that though the vibe was consistently playful and laid back, there was an important idea behind these Sunday socials: "We were coming off the back of the first big Berlin techno wave and we wanted to keep the doors of Tresor open, as they were already becoming a somewhat restrictive symbol." Ocean Club committed itself to playing music as eclectic as it was forward thinking, challenging Berlin's notoriously finicky electronic purists by mixing lo-fi, jazz, hip-hop, and Krautrock amongst the techno.

The following year, Berlin radio station Radio Eins approached Gut and Fehlmann to co-produce a Friday night program. A weekly broadcast of mermaids and fortune cookies, poetry, and guest DJ sets by the likes of Ekkehard Ehlers, Robert Lippok, and regular co-conspirator Daniel Meteo, it's always been dedicated to what Gut refers to as *lieblingslieder*, or 'loved songs.' Ocean Radio continues to broadcast every Friday night between 11 p.m. and 1 a.m. Gut introduces a diverse batch of records handpicked by herself and Fehlmann; traversing time and genre, indie rock cozies up against techno while vintage jazz rubs shoulders with spaced-out dance rock. "I was always interested in the horizontal landscape of music, because I believe that's where the real developments start," says Gut.

Ocean Club eventually moved to Berlin's popular WMF, but the next big step occurred

in 2000, when East German populist playhouse Volksbühne asked Gut and Fehlmann to curate a series of concerts to take place on each of its four fabled stages. Ocean Club presented the then-burgeoning Cologne label Kompakt, followed by a Mute night headlined by Thomas Brinkmann and Nick Cave, and hosted Dabrye's first European gig. "The sheer shock value of it all made us realize that everything was possible," says Fehlmann of the shows.

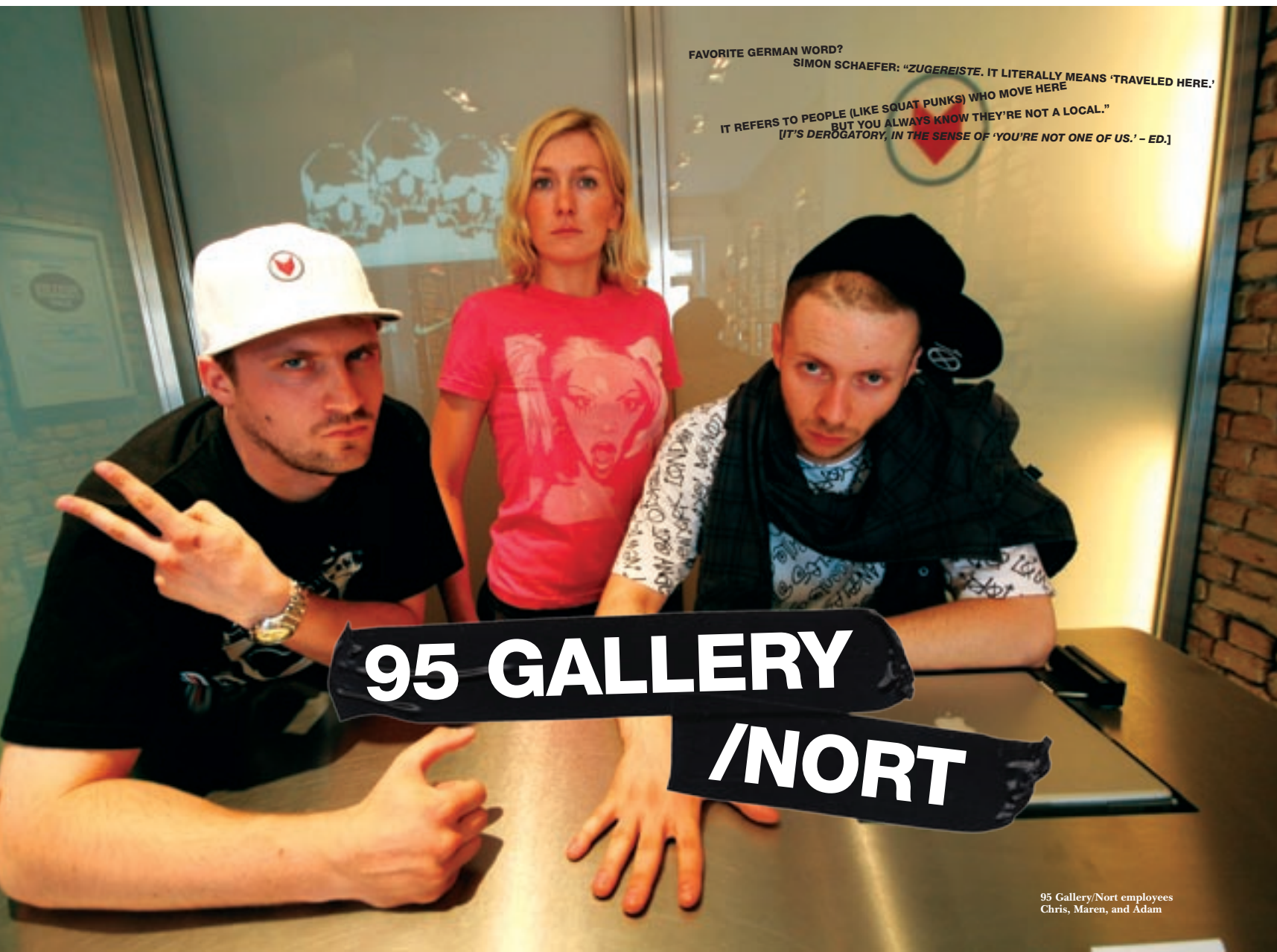
"After Volksbühne, we thought it would be nice to see what's inside our own city," Gut recalls. "Berlin had so many labels but no clear sound direction like that of Cologne." From 2001 through 2005, the Ocean Club spun off markeB, a Senate-sponsored

FAVORITE GERMAN WORD OR EXPRESSION? GUDRUN GUT: "GUTES BROT UND SPRÖDE MUSIK, WHICH MEANS 'GOOD BREAD AND BRITTLE/ROUGH MUSIC.'" THOMAS FEHLMANN: "GELASSENHEIT, MY DICTIONARY SAYS IT MEANS 'CALMNESS, COOLNESS, COMPOSURE.'"

record fair showcasing 400 hundred of Berlin's vital imprints, including Bpitch Control, ~scape, Perlon, and Shitkatapult.

These days, as Berlin pulses with the veritable bass beat of its sprawling scene, the Ocean Club is content to take a back seat. Gut and Fehlmann continue to produce their weekly Ocean Radio show, but the Club doesn't have a current residency and the future of markeB is uncertain. Fehlmann assures that this is nothing out of the ordinary: "The Ocean Club has always worked as a catalyst in certain crucial moments, then taken a step back."

www.oceanclub.de, www.flowing.de, www.myspace.com/ggut



FAVORITE GERMAN WORD?
 SIMON SCHAEFER: "ZUGEREISTE. IT LITERALLY MEANS 'TRAVELED HERE,'
 IT REFERS TO PEOPLE (LIKE SQUAT PUNKS) WHO MOVE HERE
 BUT YOU ALWAYS KNOW THEY'RE NOT A LOCAL."
 [IT'S DEROGATORY, IN THE SENSE OF 'YOU'RE NOT ONE OF US.' - ED.]

95 GALLERY /NORT

95 Gallery/Nort employees
 Chris, Maren, and Adam

A sneaker store
 and art gallery
 bring a taste of
 NY to Berlin.

Words Tyra Bangs
 Photo Jane Stockdale

Simon Schaefer has been paying attention to fashion since he was a hip-hop obsessed pre-teen wilding in the streets of West Berlin. He vividly remembers the divide between the underground-savvy Charlottenburg crew and the youth who grew up in the GDR. "Kids would come in from the East and they were [visibly] identifiable: white as white could be, almost see-through, and their pants and jackets were about 10 years too late," he reminisces. "Can you imagine what it would be like to not be exposed to marketing culture? What a gap to leap! When the Wall came down, East Germans got 100 Deutschmarks from the German government and they would [come to the West] and spend it on bananas—there were huge queues in front of the supermarkets!"

Nearly 17 years since that the Wall fell, shit is still bananas—figuratively speaking. A mere five months ago, East Berlin saw its first sneaker line outside Nort Berlin, the Nike-only store Schaefer and partner Marley co-own with Recon NYC man Stash. Though the shop has been around since 1995, the queue is a sign that the city's youth have finally succumbed to the global fiending for limited-edition kicks, with the store joining the ranks of Patta, UNDFTD, and Dave's Quality Meats in serving up the secret goods.

Doing more for the international street art monoculture is Nort's spin-off, 95 Gallery. Located down an alley to the right of the Mitte storefront, 95 Gallery is a skate/streetwear shop by day and a gallery by night. Curated with input from *Lodown* publisher Marok and Positive-Inc's Bianca Richter, the sleek, white rectangle has hosted the spray-can nozzle art of London's Nick Walker and the launch of KR's *It's All in My Head* book, wherein the space was adorned with floor-to-ceiling graffiti pieces and a tagged old-school Porsche. The main goal of the gallery is to provide a space where international visitors and the Berlin street art/culture scene can interact, and Schaefer is quick to point out that they're still growing a local audience for what they're doing.

The city has a few great places to buy sneakers—including West Berlin's mind-bending Solebox, its Mitte counterpart Trainer, and Charlottenburg's Mad Flavor—but the biggest difference between Berlin and Tokyo or New York is that everyone coexists peacefully. "I don't care about competition," shrugs Schaefer. "Over here [the market] is so small there's not millions to be made. Marley and I have other jobs, but this is a labor of love."

www.nortberlin.com, www.95gallery.com



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BERLIN REGGAE

Alex Such-A-Sound and Barney Millah break down Berlin's thriving Jamaican music scene.

Words Larisa Mann
Illustration Frederik Frede

Reggae permeates Berlin street culture down to the subways. Platform newsstands stock *Riddim*, a German-founded, German-language reggae magazine, and the trains' embedded TV screens advertise local heroes Seeed (who regularly pack stadiums all over the country). African Rastamen and white women in headwraps lounge in the doorways of Rasta centers in Prenzlauer Berg and Kreuzberg, while the latest 7" singles from Jamaica are organized by release date (down to the week), label, and riddim at Deeroy's Dub Store. Over at Tricky Tunes, the dub music section represents sounds from Kingston to Krakow.

Incubated in the squatter, punk, and anti-fascist scenes of the 1970s and '80s, reggae latched on to the exploding German hip-hop community in the '90s and now has a firm grasp on the country's pop culture. Berlin boasts reggae parties every night of the week, and two of the names you see most frequently on flyers are Such-a-Sound and Barney Millah. The pair hosts a monthly party at Café Moskau, a former Communist military club, and a Monday night event at Bohannon, which is an extension of Berlin's longest-running reggae party, initially started by Millah (a.k.a. Tobias Frost) at the Geburtstagsklub in 1994. Alex Such-a-Sound and Millah are basically nocturnal due to their hectic DJ schedules, so I was lucky to grab a few minutes with them during an August rainstorm.

When did the reggae scene in Berlin start?

Barney Millah: As far as I know, there was one sound-system in the late '70s [and] during the 1980s, reggae really only existed in community centers. It was the '90s that really hyped up the scene.

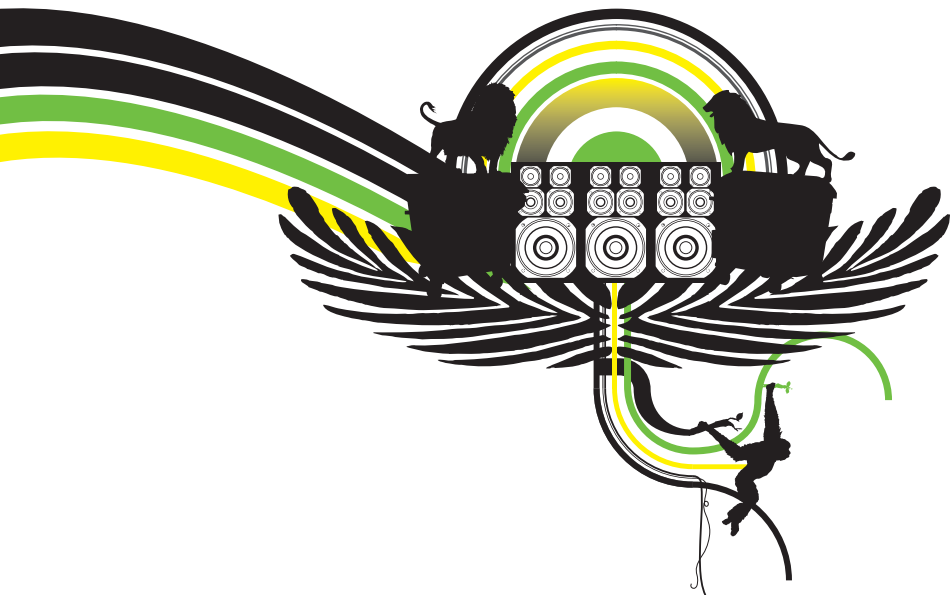
Alex Such-a-Sound: When the Wall came down, every bar and basement changed into a club. [Those were] some crazy years. Nobody had a license, everything was illegal, but it was happening anyway. Nobody from the government cared.

BM: Even if someone cared, you just closed down and opened up in another place. You didn't need flyers; word of mouth was enough to get people to the parties. Another result of this "Wild East" time is that a lot of these party promoters got their own clubs—in the mid-'90s, reggae and dancehall came out of community centers and into clubs.

AS: Before, it was more of an insider scene; after that it was everyone.

BM: Around 1997, a lot more people jumped on the reggae train... By 2000, there was four times as much reggae in Berlin as before. So many sound systems, so many people [whose names or faces] I didn't know, even though I worked in a reggae shop for years.

AS: Now, if you are starting a sound system, the hardest thing is finding a name that is not taken!



What's the ethnic mix?

BM: Officially in Berlin we have 300 Jamaicans, but you might see 50 in the clubs.

AS: Here you have a huge African community. Before, in East Germany, you called [some African countries] the "Socialist Brothers."

BM: Like Mozambique.

AS: ...they had a big student exchange with the East. So from that point you have a lot of Africans in Germany—they make up part of the audience.

BM: You have a lot of children out of relationships between these students and Germans. And [in West Germany] also from soldiers: French soldiers who were mostly [of] African heritage and British Caribbean soldiers and black Americans, a lot of them stayed here... So you have Afro-Germans.

AS: Plus a huge [non-Afro] German audience. The mix out of all of this makes the crowd you work with. The main thing that we do is [to not] play for one kind of audience. Also, we have up to 70% girls at our parties.

BM: Girls like to come to our parties and have fun. People who are indecent in these cases, we reform them or they have to leave the club. Another thing I realized [is that], for instance, in England, people are scared of Caribbean people, of gangster business. We don't have that here (*knocks on wood*).

Would you say it is more of a DJ scene or a band scene?

BM: DJs, definitely.

AS: [Promoters] can't afford a lot of those bands anymore. Not just fees, but also taxes and the price for the venues.

BM: The youngsters are crying out for conscious dancehall [shows], but Marcia Griffiths and Lady G and a complete band came and only 150 people showed up. That's nothing! So promoters don't make back the money. When you ask the kids, [they say] "It's too expensive." Berlin is one of the cheapest cities in the world to go out, and people say they don't want to pay more for a band.

AS: But then again, we charge eight Euros at Café Moskau—which is a lot for a club in Berlin—and we get 1000 people.

What about the sound here: roots or dancehall?

AS: It depends; it's a big menu. You can choose whatever you like. At a good night, you can hear everything: roots, dancehall, hip-hop, soca, African reggae.

BM: As a DJ, you can go from the '60s up to nowadays. You can even play dub if it fits at that certain moment.

What are the best spots for reggae?

AS: Café Moskau, Bohannon, and Yaam.

BM: The Yaam is an important spot in Berlin. It started in '94 and runs in the summertime from May to September, open-air every Sunday from 2 p.m.-10 p.m. with a market, Afro-Caribbean food, and reggae music all day. Families come with their children... It's a big gathering where people from all scenes in Berlin meet, and the music is reggae. It's opened the ears of a lot of people.

What reggae bands are coming out of Berlin?

AS: Sceed, definitely—they're the German super-band. It gives me goosebumps every time I see them.

BM: If you see them on a tour, each and every show will be different. They're real performers. Gentleman is big here, but he's from Cologne.

AS: He's the biggest single act from Germany. And you have Patrice—he's not really a dancehall or reggae artist.

BM: He works with reggae but he doesn't call himself a reggae artist. There is a group called Culture Candela. They're seven guys, all of them from a different background: a white German, three Latinos from different countries, and one Afro-German—a real mix. Their music is also mixed: you find Latin music, hip-hop, and reggae, and singing in three languages.

AS: In general, the "hip-hop over here, reggae over here" thing changed in the late '90s, completely. You always have your favorites, but there is not one hip-hop DJ who's not going to play a reggae set. I play a lot of hip-hop in my reggae sets, Barney plays soca...

BM: That's the future.

AS: That's where the fun comes in.

www.suchasound.com, www.bohannon.de, www.riddim.de, www.yaam.de



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FAVORITE GERMAN EXPRESSION?
AS: "A FRIEND OF MINE FROM JAMAICA WAS HERE LAST YEAR
AND THE FIRST GERMAN HE LEARNED WAS 'SCHWUNG IN DIE BUDE BRINGEN,'
WHICH BASICALLY MEANS 'LET'S GET IT STARTED.'"

BM: IT'S OLD-TIME SLANG THAT OUR FATHERS WOULD SAY; THAT'S WHAT MAKES IT FUNNY.
AS: HEARING HIM SAYING IT, ESPECIALLY PRACTICING IT ON THE MIC, WAS JUST TOO FUNNY.

SASSE

A disco-loving Finn finds a home for his multiple personalities.

Words Ken Taylor

Amidst the influx of electronic music producers claiming Berlin as their new home, Sasse Lindblad is what you might call an early adopter. The 33-year-old producer moved there in the late '90s to take advantage of what didn't exist in his native Finland: low rents, great clubs, and a thriving, diverse culture. "The most important thing is the chilled surroundings where I work," he says. "Prenzlauer Berg, where my studios are, is more like a village inside a huge city. Very nice and relaxed, but still very productive."

Sasse has no problem keeping busy. Alongside the releases he's put out under the monikers Freestyle Man and Mr. Negative (the latter with Olivier Spencer and Holmar Filipsson), Lindblad reels off the names of the many labels that he runs effortlessly: "Moodmusic and Mood Limited are pretty straightforward electronic house labels; Must! is for disco and Italo jams and some Chicago stuff (usually edits and re-works); Sunday Music is basically [Henrik Schwarz's] baby; Rave Your Mummy is self-explanatory; and Futuro is our retro Chicago/Detroit/Turku label, where we release music from Mono Junk."

Funny enough, Sasse's actually had it with all the pseudonyms. "I just want to make music that I like and release it under one name [that] people know. If one day it is jacking house and the next day jazzy downbeats, it doesn't matter to me. It's music—fuck the rest!" he exclaims.

If you need pigeonholes, Sasse's latest LP *Made Within The Upper Stairs Of Heaven* belongs firmly in the '70s and '80s Italo-disco and electro racks; its instrumental burners ("Do Robots Have Soul," "Legacy") are smothered in thumping synths, the Moroder effect cranked to 11. On "Loosing Touch," [sic] Sasse crafts a dark pop backbeat and enlists Bpitch Control's Kiki to guide the track with get-low sung/spoken vocals; others, including Losoul's Malte, also sparingly lend their voices to *Made Within*.

Sasse's quick to point out that he's not the only one influenced by the city's varied musical landscape. "A few weeks ago, Ice Cube was at Bar25 at an afterhours [party]. Everybody was kinda checking him out like, 'What the fuck? Is it really him?' He and his bodyguards were cool... They were amazed by the music and probably just wanted to check some new flavors."

Sasse's *Made Within The Upper Stairs Of Heaven* is out now on Moodmusic.
www.moodmusicrecords.com

FAVORITE GERMAN WORD?
"WELL, IT MUST BE SCHEISSE ('SHIT'), AS I USE IT CONSTANTLY!"

FAVORITE GERMAN WORD? EURO8000: "SCHWEINEHAXE. IT'S A PART OF THE PIG. A TRUE BAVARIAN MEAL."

K.I.Z.

(From left to right): Euro8000 (crouching), Maxim, and Tarek

Pussy-loving proletariats revamp German hip-hop.

Words Tyra Bangs
Photo Dirk Merten

K.I.Z. seriously loves hip-hop, but their hip-hop is anything but serious. On "Hurensohn" ("Son of A Whore") they rap "I'm gonna party on your grave/You try the crip walk once again and I'll rip off your legs." "Riesenglied" (which translates as "DickCock") is a remake of Absolute Beginner's 1998 German rap hit "Liebeslied" ("Love Songs") with a psychedelic phallocentrism that would make Too \$hort blush; a sample lyric: "Met up with your daughter at night in the forest/I dressed as a tree, she had my branch in her throat."

Of course, this foursome-kindred spirits of Spankrock, TTC, and Plastic Little—raps entirely in German, so unless you *sprechen sie deutsch* you're not going to grok all the dirty jokes. So why should you care? Because K.I.Z. is some of the best that the vast German hip-hop scene—which is filled with guttural rappers trying to look and sound like Juelz Santana—has to offer.

Fast forward past the crew's 2005 debut, *Das RapDeutschlandKettensägenMassaker* (*The German Rap Chainsaw Massacre*) and straight to March 2006's *Böhse Enkelz* (*Bad Grandsons*) mixtape for a taste of how rappers Euro8000, Maxim, and Tarek adroitly tailor their party rhymes to backing tracks by Aphex Twin, White Stripes, and Lil' Jon. "It's so boring that people just translate the hooks to 50 Cent and do their own part on the beat," says 23-year-old Euro8000. "It reminds me of Phil Collins, who does Walt Disney soundtracks in eight different languages. And hip-hop about hip-hop is the most boring thing," he continues. "Rappers do hip-hop for other rappers and they wonder why they don't sell copies! Germans don't know so many things about rap, so you have to be a bit more creative [lyrically]."

To that end, the boys rhyme about girls and grilling (as in BBQing), not glocks

and gold chains (neither of which are too common in Berlin). But their main priority remains agitating, as on Tarek's "Was Willst Du Machen?!" ("What Will You Do?!"), which plays with stereotypes that German natives have of Turkish and Arab people. "It was so everyone could live out their hidden racism," laughs Nico of the song, which inspired many comments on their website's guestbook from people wanting to stab them.

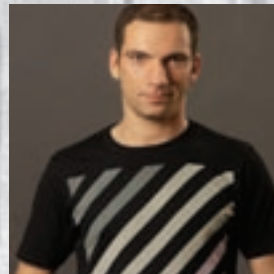
The crew refuses to take even these threats seriously. "We do make fun of stereotypes, but on the other side we are these stereotypes," says Nico. "We make fun of ourselves, too."

www.k-i-z.com

I, D J

Getting personal with 10 of Berlin's hottest deck-orators.

Words Ken Taylor



APOLLO

DJing: Since the late '80s
Affiliations: Hard:Edged/Recycle/Watergate
Style: A full range of well-produced, dancefloor-oriented drum & bass
Favorite DJ in Berlin? For D&B, it's DJ Metro.
Most prized record? Bob James "One" from 1974
New releases: Nothing new, but he's running a surf/snow/streetwear shop with some friends.

www.hardedged.de



DINKY

DJing: 11 years
Affiliations: Horizontal/Traum/Panoramabar/Cocoon
Style: Big, effective, simple 4/4 productions that move hips
Favorite DJ in Berlin? At the moment, it's Zip from Perlon.
Most prized record? My first vinyl ever, Paperclip People's "Throw," in its original sleeve. It's a bit trashed.
New releases: Projects for Cocoon and Underline, an album in the works for Crosstown Rebels, and work with Chilean pop star Jorge Gonzales for her Horizontal label.

www.dinkyland.net



DJ KAOS

DJing: 15 years
Affiliations: Faith/Rough Trade/Kitsuné/Rong
Style: Eclectic, but mostly Italo-disco these days
Favorite DJ in Berlin? Luciano and Danny Wang
Most prized record? Supermax "Love Machine" b/w "Dance Dance Dance"
New releases: *Danse, Gravité Zéro* compilation with Sal Principato (Faith/Rough Trade), plus remixes for Roxy Music, Lo-Fi-Fnk, and Shit Robot.

www.myspace.com/kaosoak

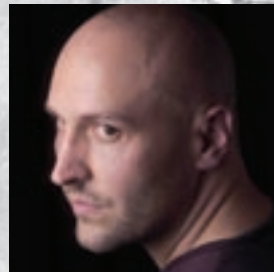


DJ METRO

DJing: Since the early '90s
Affiliations: Hard:Edged/Watergate/Friendly Fire
Style: Soulful, dancefloor-oriented drum & bass
Favorite DJ in Berlin? For hip-hop, it's DJ Hype from the Phaderheadz; house-wise, it's Sebo K; and the mighty Dixon always plays amazing sets.

Most prized record? Some of my old Prescription Underground house records are worth a bit and I have lots of drum & bass classics (such as the "I'm Raving I'm Raving" promo on Shut Up and Dance), which used to sell for big money on eBay.
New releases: Dub Tao "Season Dub (Tactile Remix)" (Hard:edged) is out now.

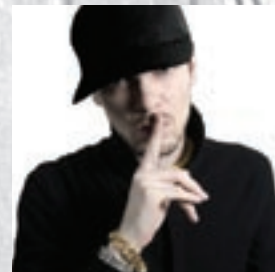
www.hardedged.de,
www.friendly-fire-berlin.net



BENNO BLOME

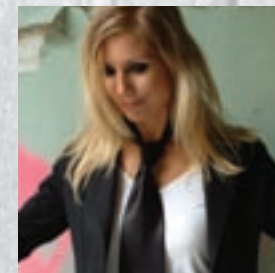
DJing: 11 years
Affiliations: Sender Records
Style: Techno, techno, techno.
Favorite DJ in Berlin? Bloody Mary
Best Berlin club? Bar25. It's amazing. Time flies there.
New releases: WeltZwei's "Radarius" 12" is out now, and a collaboration with Baby Ford comes out this fall.

www.sender-records.de



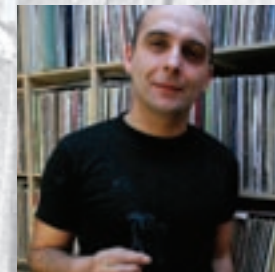
DJ MAXXIMUS

DJing: 8 years
Affiliations: BasstheWorld/MG77
Style: Berlin breaks with UK bass
Favorite DJ in Berlin? Something J
Most prized record? People paid £250 for the Sweat EP on kool.POP, [on which I had] a track.
New releases: "Dem All Shot" with Tinchy Stryder and Dirty Danger and the "Dirty Danger Anthem" are out now.
www.djmaxximus.com,
www.basstheWorld.blogspot.com,
www.mg77.com



MISS YETTI

DJing: 14 years
Affiliations: Gold und Liebe/Deep Club
Style: Energetic tech-house to dark electro to hypnotic techno, with dark and melancholic influences.
Favorite DJ in Berlin? There are a lot of good musicians.
Best Berlin club? Deep, 'cause it's the best location in Berlin (it's three levels below the earth); fitting for the music I adore, and it's illegal. There is no advertising and people know about the parties only via email.
New releases: Remixes of *Miss Yetti Insights* by Andre Kraml, Silversurfer, and Pantone, and a new project with Robert Goerl.
www.miss-yetti.com



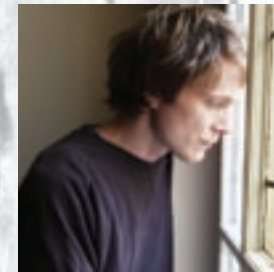
DJ NAUGHTY

DJing: 22 years
Affiliations: Eskimo/Couture Records/Week 12end
Style: Kicky, club-detonating electro-house
Favorite DJ in Berlin? Ewan Pearson, Dixon, Sebo K, Daniel Haaksman
Most prized record? My first record I did for Ferox: Naughty & Tolis "Minimal Accent" (1994)
New releases: Remixes for GrandadBob "Pictures" (Southern Fried) and Sasse (feat. Malte) "Up2u" (Moodmusic).
www.dj-naughty.com



PROSUMER

DJing: Since the early '90s
Affiliations: Playhouse/Panoramabar
Style: Timeless, jacking, Chicago- and Detroit-influenced house and techno
Favorite DJ in Berlin? It is impossible to name just one.
Most prized record? At the moment, it's Chez Damier and Ron Trent "Hip To Be Disillusioned Vol. 1" (Prescription).
New releases: A label in the works, and a Sebo K. remix (with Prosumer's vocals) forthcoming on Mobilee.
www.myspace.com/prosumer



DANIEL METEO

DJing: 8 years
Affiliations: Meteosound/Shitkatapult
Style: Soul dub city music
Favorite DJ in Berlin? Zip, DJ Flush, Phon.o, Peter Grummich, Barbara Preisinger
Most prized record? Barrington Levy's "Sunny Day" or my instrumental/vocal 12" of Notorious B.I.G.'s "Hypnotize"
New releases: *Peruments* on Meteosound, a collaboration with Fenin on Shitkatapult, and a new 12" on Karaoke Kalk sublabel Kalk Pets on the way.
www.meteosound.net



RIO NIGHTS RIO NIGHTS



RIO CLUB BERLIN
PHOTOS BY ANNA SCHLAEGER
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Photo by Qarim Brown



Tigo

**Album
Reviews
10.06**



ELECTRO-POP DON'T STOP WITH UPDATES FROM THESE THREE STANDARD-BEARERS.

**TIGA
SEXOR**

Last Gang/CAN/CD

**ARLING & CAMERON
HI-FI UNDERGROUND**

Challenge/NETH/CD

**JUNIOR BOYS
SO THIS IS GOODBYE**

Domino/US/CD

Understand that 'Count' in Junior Boys' "Count Souvenirs" is a nobleman's title, not an imperative. The song's eponymous lead role is played by low-level royalty, living alone in his parents' castle with all the trappings of grandeur, tempered by the knowledge that it's all amounted to something beyond his privileged genes.

Count Souvenirs, the character, is just one of the most engaging aspects of *So This Is Goodbye*, the Canadian savants' thoroughly compelling sophomore album. He's a watershed moment in electro's timeline: representative of synth-pop reaching maturity and realizing that just because it can't turn lead into gold doesn't mean it must implode.

The autumnal electro-pop of Junior Boys' *Last Exit*—warm synth washes and bubbles, mechanized handclaps, breathy vocals—remains intact on *Goodbye*, which is as distantly melodic and rhythmic as ever. Hidden in the melancholy are tales of adoration and loathing, fear and joy—real characters and lives. On *Goodbye*'s most elevated tracks, such as the 22nd-century R&B of "Like a Child" or the cover of Frank Sinatra's "When No One Cares," the group sounds like The Neptunes producing Emily Brontë—the first-ever electro-lit-song concept album.

So This Is Goodbye might be electro's *Sgt. Pepper*'s moment, but other survivors of the electro revival have gracefully weathered the music's renaissance as well. After a five-year hiatus, Arling & Cameron return with a similarly matured effort, *Hi-Fi Underground*, and sex-lectro darling Tigo drops *Sexor*, his long-awaited (at least in the US) full-length. Each plays a radically different position on the electro team, leading the way—along with Adult., among others—into the music's new century.

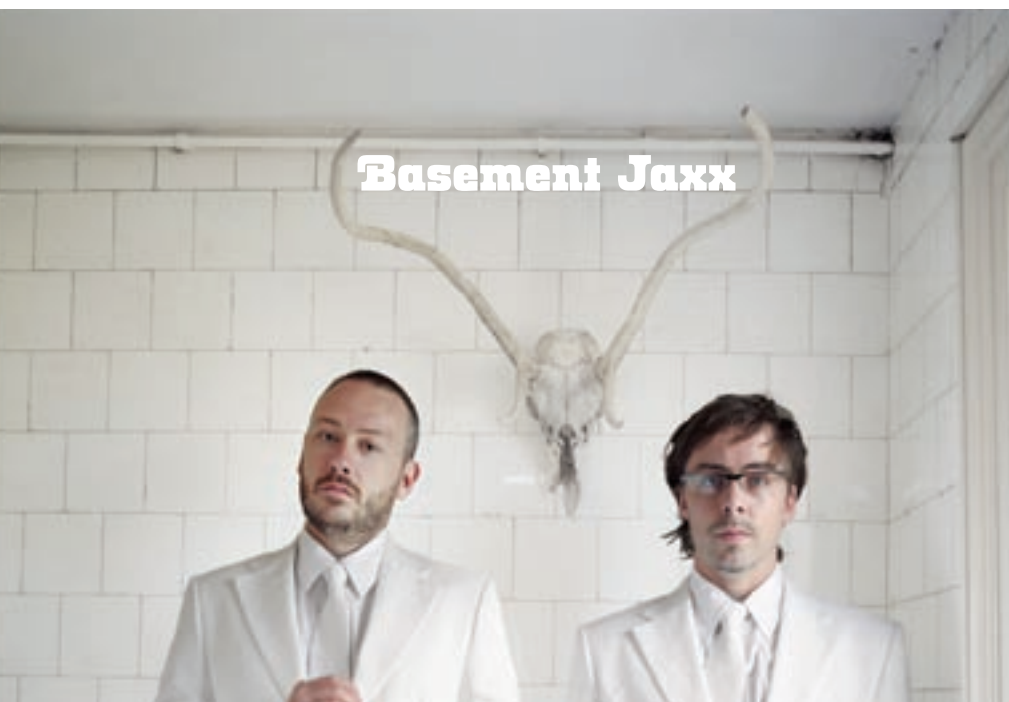
Where *Goodbye* lacks—referential humor and dance-floor sleekness—electro flagship duo Arling & Cameron delivers. *Hi-Fi Underground* might be rich in well-honed cliché ("Shake

It" contains the refrain "Get naked/Shake it"), but there's some sincerity to its message: Arling & Cameron are nothing more or less than themselves.

Besides electro-conceptual standards such as "Computer," where Princess Superstar makes a bid to be iPod's ironic spokeskitten, *Hi-Fi*'s tunes run the gamut from "Open," a modernized Gainsbourg/Bardot collaboration, to the acoustic-guitar-laden synth-folk anthem "We Can't Be Somebody Else." From the ELO-ish "oohs" that accompany their instrumentals to the most forthright statement of electro Zen ("And if you give me all you got/I'll tell you I don't need it"), A&C rises above the clattering clicks.

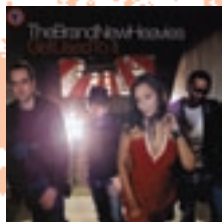
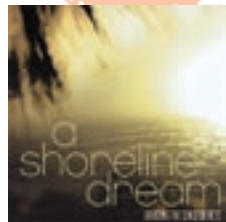
Meanwhile, Montreal's Tigo is the family's drunk uncle, possessed of strong beats and a dirty mind. After a decade-plus in the game, Tigo harnesses all of his eccentricity into a full-length debut that could be among the most rewarding, if counterintuitive, tributes to dance music's continuum. Tigo's sort-of-infamous covers are present, if not always welcome. (Public Enemy paean "Louder Than A Bomb" is fun; a version of Talking Heads' "Burning Down the House" is hit-worthy; and Nine Inch Nails' "Down In It," deadpan and minimal, is funny the first time.) But the number of remakes is puzzling, given that his original compositions—like the Italo-disco "Good as Gold" or the electro-pulsing "(Far From) Home"—are far more fully formed, musically and conceptually.

Like *Hi-Fi*, *Sexor* follows the singular theme of singularity: Far from electro's looking-out-from-the-crowd roboticism, Tigo's ultra-melodic pop message is summed up by the incessant mantra of "Brothers": "It's true that you're a bit like me but you're a lot like you/and I'm not like you/and you're not like me." Justin Hopper



BASEMENT JAXX
CRAZY ITCH RADIO

XL/US/CD
Basement Jaxx boys Simon Ratcliffe and Felix Buxton once had the house scene on lock, to the point where they had dancefloor dons like Erick Morillo contributing guest vocals to their records. *Crazy Itch Radio* continues a trend from their last few albums—folding in guest stars and different genres at the expense of their more explosive, straight-ahead sound—that provides diminishing returns. Silly lines (even by dance standards) and what sounds like a Muppet-led refrain tarnish the tight and glittery opening jam “Hush Boy,” while other uptempo tracks like Balkan-beat boogie “Hey You!” and the banjo bounce of “Take Me Back to Your House” are good but not “Good Luck”—great. As the dramatic operatic intro suggests, the Jaxx rose to fame by dropping full-bore, attention-grabbing tracks. Now they’re making songs that, compared to past efforts, are more relaxed and radio-ready. *Patrick Sisson*



A CLOUD MIREYA
SINGULAR

Eastern Developments/US/CD
Singular is a collaboration between On!Air!Library!’s Claudia Deheza and Prefuse 73’s Guillermo Scott Herren. With plenty of mistakes left in, the album retains a simplicity that belies its sophisticated production. Herren’s light touch leaves the tracks feeling fragile and honest, with just enough sheen to please the ear. Few songs approach single status, leaning instead towards a more fractured, floating compositional aesthetic—a possible exception is “Those Nights,” which feels like it would have been included on the *Garden State* soundtrack had it only been finished in time. Fans of Tortoise, Mogwai, or even Eno ought to find plenty to like here. *Alexander Posell*



A SHORELINE DREAM
AVOIDING THE CONSEQUENCES

Latenight Weeknight/US/CD
When *Avoiding the Consequences*’ hour-long stare finally breaks, there’s sea foam at your feet, sleep in your eyes, and it’s clear why Ryan Policky and his Colorado-based four-piece call themselves A Shoreline Dream. But while the distant melodies, the swirling, treated guitars, the understated drumming, and the muffled sonics are on a perpetual slow dive toward shogaze, Policky and Company’s ride offers up a different kind of atmo-

sphere. It’s a complicated brand of sorcery that spooks and rattles as songs smear themselves all over the record in an experience that never truly ends, even after album-closer “The End” promises you it has. *Robbie Mackey*

AZAM ALI
ELYSIUM FOR THE BRAVE

Six Degrees/US/CD
From her work in the duo Vas to the groundbreaking Persian electronic outfit Niyaz, Iranian vocalist Azam Ali somehow digs deeper with each effort. Singing predominantly in English, with occasional flourishes of Urdu and Farsi poetry, Ali beautifully combines organic rhythmic sections—King Crimson’s Trey Gunn and Pat Mastelotto back her up—with producer Carmen Rizzo’s masterful digital touch. Ali’s voice shines atop Loga Ramin Torkian’s brilliant lute playing on “Spring Arrives,” and downright slays the ear on the haunting “The Tryst.” Ali’s timeless voice will ring down through the ages, and this is her finest hour. *Derek Beres*

APPARAT ORGAN QUARTET
APPARAT ORGAN QUARTET

Skelt/BEL/CD
Imagine Kraftwerk if they were born under Iceland’s aurora borealis, beside its dormant volcanos, and amongst its close-knit communities, rather than on the faceless rush of the Autobahn. Reykjavik’s Apparat Organ Quartet is such an outfit. With organs, vocoders, and boxes of tools, the band creates dignified music that could be a hot springs-warmed, zombie-movie soundtrack, or a retro-futurist rendering of Sigur Rós. The brainchild of film/theater/pop-music composer and all-around musical genius Jóhann Jóhannsson, AQQ’s debut album is sometimes scary, and always cinematic, but without the background blandness such music can require: These are the sounds of kinship between audience and performer. *Justin Hopper*

BEEDA WEEDA
TURFOLOGY 101

PTB/US/CD
The rules of turfology are simple: grind until you die, don’t snitch, and “keep your mind on your money and your ear to the street,” as Beeda Weeda imparts on “Like Me.” The East Oakland rapper walks the pimp walk and talks the turf talk, and the beats all slap like Max Julien on PCP, even if Beeda’s undistinguished flow falls a notch below super-hyphy. Highlights include “Turf’s Up” and “Rippa Slippas,” which explains how Weeda likes to clothe his hoes in chinchilla. Nothing you’d play within grandma’s earshot, but if you’re swangin’ the scraper, you already know what it is. *Eric K. Arnold*

BODYCODE
THE CONSERVATION OF ELECTRIC CHARGE

Spectral Sound/US/CD
Monotone but not monochromatic, Bodycode is the dancefloor-destined guise of Cape Town-bred and Lisbon-based producer Alan Abrahams (a.k.a. Portable). Bodycode has a fierce single-mindedness without being a one-trick pony. “I, Data” is an unwavering track that references the original man-machines, Kraftwerk, but where Bodycode emerges fully realized is in the moments that feel less like the grimy industrial pockets of Europe and more like the tribal, prismatic expanses of Abrahams’ African homeland (“Gene Patch,” “Bounce Back,” and “Local Traffic”). Ranging between six and eight minutes, these melodic micro-edits strive and stride for feverish floor-filling insistence, and are successful more often than not. *Tony Ware*

BRAND NEW HEAVIES
GET USED TO IT

Delicious Vinyl/US/CD
“Hope you’re ready/Here we come/We ain’t gon’ leave you with nowhere to go.” N’Dea Davenport coos on “We’ve Got,” announcing the return of BNH’s grown and sexy music. The OGs of neo-soul pick right up where they left off with an album that could have easily been recorded 10 years ago, or 10 minutes ago. Davenport channels Diana Ross (“I Don’t Know Why”), liberates your mind (“I Just Realized”), rides a sultry rhythm while chastising a wayward lover (“We Won’t Stop”), and evokes classic disco (“Let’s Do It Again”), while the Heavies prove they’ve still got the grooves. *Eric K. Arnold*

CHIEF KAMACHI
CONCRETE GOSPEL

Babygrande/US/CD
In Chief Kamachi’s world, there aren’t a whole lot of good times going down. On his sophomore solo shot, this fiery-voiced Philly native unleashes an onslaught of solemn ghetto scriptures atop the darkly tinged yet bumping production of DJ Huggy and E. Dan. As over-cast as tracks like “Death Choir” can appear, Kamachi does a masterful job of capturing

the ongoing struggles that the black community faces in the inner city. But beyond merely reporting on his surroundings, Kamachi lets it be known (on “Little African Boy”) that he’s “in search of a cure for the poison coming off the streets.” *Max Herman*

D-TENSION
CONTACTS AND CONTRACTS II

Brick/US/CD
With hip-hop producer albums a dime a dozen these days, even a seasoned beat-smith like D-Tension may have a hard time standing out in the crowd. But instead of trying outlandish concepts for his own sake, he sticks to the basics on *Contacts and Contracts II*. As on *Contacts and Contracts I*, D-Tension again brings together a respectable lineup of indie MCs (i.e. Slug, Akrobatik, and Wordsworth) to rhyme over his hard-hitting, East Coast-centric productions, and the overall experience is satisfactory. Surprisingly, though, it’s D-Tension’s hilarious bonus solo album, *Rap Music Sucks*—included here—that’s the real selling point. *Max Herman*

DARKEL
DARKEL

Astralwerks/US/CD
Forget *The Wizard of Oz*. “Be My Friend,” the first track on *Darkel*, answers the hypothetical question. “What if *Dark Side of the Moon* synched up with *The Exorcist*?” Darkel—JB Dunckel, the half of Air who explored weedy crooning on that duo’s *Talkie Walkie*—then follows the jam with a run of prog-pop, recalling everything from Beatlesque jauntiness to Eno’s *Here Come the Warm Jets*. Whereas Air is seductive but sometimes studious, Darkel is detached from expectations so brazenly flirtatious, and an afterglow radiates throughout the blithe, sprightly release. *Tony Ware*

ANTHONY DAVID
THE RED CLAY CHRONICLES

Brash/US/CD
An early friendship between two Atlantans inspired the musical careers of both India. Arie and Anthony David. Indeed, India sounds magnificent on the duet “Words,” which is included on this sophomore outing. David’s soulful guitar strumming and reliance on a dusky, woody, R&B-inflected voice that proves to be his calling card. His fervent slides on “Smoke One” and the funky “Sho Nuff” will make these tracks as memorable as any by Donny Hathaway and Bill Withers: “Everything is Everything” has that intimate, lean-on-him sort of soul. *Derek Beres*

DR. WHO DAT?
BEAT JOURNEY

Lex/UK/CD
Jneiro Jarel got his feet wet in music as an MC more than a decade ago, but he has since grown into one of the most remarkable hip-hop-rooted instrumentalists around. Recording under the moniker Dr. Who Dat?, Jarel produces a wide palette of soulful creations here, ranging from chunky, undulating hip-hop (“B-Boy Portrait In Spain”) to Brazilian-tinged jazz (“Brazilian Thought”). Without the help of any MCs or guest vocalists, his *Beat Journey* is an uninterrupted quest into both the familiar and furthest regions of sound. *Max Herman*

EARMINT
ANOTHER EARLY EVENING

EV Productions/US/CD
While his debut isn’t the sonic palate-cleanser that his moniker implies, producer Robert Krums shows promise on *Another Early Evening*. Showcasing both his dense instrumentals and rapper-friendly tracks, it’s a respectable introduction that includes flattering references from contributing rappers like Chicago’s Psalm One and Diverse. Earmint’s steadily bubbling and recalibrating beats aren’t wedded to any one style, and the disc shuffles from the trampoline-bounce background of opener “The Flash Slang” to the languid “So Much For Nothing” and the slightly muted DJ Shadow-like stampede of “Cut to Carchase.” He’s not exactly the freshmaker yet, but he could be in time. *Patrick Sisson*

EL GOODO
EL GOODO

Empyream/US/CD
Ask your dad: The 1960s blew the top off of a lot of things, rock music hardly excluded. From the radical re-envisioning of folk to the wildfire spread of psychedelic drugs, a lot happened, and nothing has been the same since. Wales’ ’60s-adoring band El Goodo is proof. Their self-titled debut offers songs like “Here it Comes” (a direct rip of VU’s “Heroin”) and the foot-shooter “Stuck in the Sixties.” The gang’s all here: Brian Wilson faux-percussion bobs, Farfisa organ runs, and Byrdsy jangle dominate, but the line between homage and rip-off never seemed so treacherous. *Robbie Mackey*

ENSEMBLE
ENSEMBLE

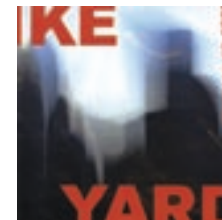
Fat Cat/UK/CD
In the half-decade since his Replex-released *Sketch Proposals*, Olivier Alary has written with and remixed Björk as well as recording as one third of the Prix Ars Electronica-nominated group Chloergeschlecht. Alary’s reanimated Ensemble sounds perfectly poised, equidistant between electronic and acoustic, between melody and noise, between loveliness and abstraction. The Toulouse-born, Montreal-based producer backgrounds the voices of Lou Barlow, Cat Power’s Chan Marshall, Camille Claverie, and (fellow sonic arts student) Mileece with digital and orchestral walls of sound to produce an album that thrives on its various antithetical qualities. *David Hemingway*

ES WAVES
NAKATOMI PLAZA

Inaspace/UK/CD
Ambient producers can find themselves caught between swooping and spaced-out, a dichotomy that Stephen Woolridge (a.k.a. Es Waves) mostly navigates successfully. The nine tracks here revel in their synthy layers and the fluid darkness that comes from music based more on emotional states than devotion to a particular structure. But a little structure can go a long way, and the sometimes-overlong songs (the 10-minute “To Touch”) find Woolridge substituting length for true tension. *Luciana Lopez*

FORWARD, RUSSIA!
GIVE ME A WALL

Dance to the Radio/UK/CD
Forward, RISSD! might be a better name for these Brits, since they unleash a heavy, Les Savy Fav-like groove on their debut. No singer can match the charisma of L.S.V.’s



PIGEON JOHN
...AND THE SUMMERTIME POOL PARTY

Quannum/US/CD
If Pigeon John represents a “new generation of just regular dudes,” then hip-hop is in for a promising future. While this Angeleno’s last album, *Pigeon John Sings The Blues*, was heavy on self-deprecation, here he exudes pure confidence with producers RJD2, DJ Rhettmatic, and newcomers supplying the uptempo heat. On “Freaks! Freaks!” John tells females who paid him no mind, “It’s the boy that you laughed at/Didn’t give me a chance now I drive a Cadillac/So what, it’s 12 years old/Baby, it’s still cold.” With his head held high, he humorously reflects on the many ways he’s been fired (“I Lost My Job Again”) and even grills God on why he let the world take a turn for the worse (“As We Know It”). Free of reservations, this regular dude brings forth his best album to date. *Max Herman*



beefy indie-rock provocateur Tim Harrington, but Forward, Russia!'s Tom Woodhead keeps things interesting, occasionally spazzing out but mostly sticking to the Bloc Party school of grandiose vocal stylings. Though the individually numbered (only) tracks can seem indistinguishable, the album is solid. It would be tempting to say that a band with so many well-worn influences works only in theory, but Forward, Russia! shouldn't be written off. *Patrick Sisson*

CHRIS HERBERT
MEZZOTINT

Kranky/US/CD

Mezzotint slots snugly into Kranky's mold of meticulously chiseled ambient acts (Loscil, Chihei Hatakeyama, Pan American). Birmingham's Chris Herbert defines himself as a non-musician, and his tweaking of found sounds and field recordings reveals an intuitive grasp of forlorn moods and evocative, gradually evolving textures. The poignancy of a distant airplane-engine drone is a common motif in much beatless music, and Herbert employs the convention well. Within his subtly oscillating tone collages, a gentle struggle between tranquility and turbulence plays out. The result is like being submerged in a sensory deprivation tank while someone introduces nettles into it. *Dave Segal*



EZEKIEL HONIG
SCATTERED PRACTICES

Microcosm Music-Kompakt/GER/CD

At his best on *Scattered Practices*, Ezekiel Honig meshes elements of IDM's rhythmic twitchiness and textures with dub's immersive atmospheres, while creating melodies that probe emotional depths. But *Practices'* innate niceness makes engagement with this introverted music difficult. The most interesting track, "Going Sailing Refrain 2," rides a deliberate, Wolfgang Voigt-like techno rhythm and is embellished with torqued clicks and a bizarrely



Plastic Little

Photo by Michael Scott Whitson

PLASTIC LITTLE
SHE'S MATURE

Traffic/US/CD

Plastic Little walks a fine line between making music and making comedy. That's not to say their brand of post-PC, ironic humor isn't palatable (entertaining, even)—you've just got to have the stomach for it. *She's Mature* sees them mocking everything from Afrocentrism to thug love-triangles and the Five-Percent ideology, to their own hipster scene, and they return often to their favorite themes: party crashing, pulling drunk chicks for one-night stands, and doing it all on a dime. While that's often amusing, the jokes have their flaws: Songs like "That's the Jump Off"—a rap explaining the phrase itself—come off like Urban Slang 101 for white folks. PL's at its best on bangers like "Another Rap Hit," which plays to the strengths of their sleazy, club-hollering lyricism ("Fellas, grab your big old dicks/Ladies, rub your wet-ass clits"), their intentionally foul sexual and racial politics, and their pared-down, slam-and-shuffle basslines. *Stacey Dugan*

warped choir, seemingly recorded in a well. Elsewhere, the disc recalls Junior Boys' melancholy electro-pop without the mopey vocals, or Boards of Canada without the magical glaze of nostalgia for an unknown past. *Dave Segal*

MARC HOULE
BAY OF FIGS

Minus/CAN/CD

If any electronic style should earn the adjective "intelligent," it's Richie Hawtin's acquisitions for Minus: music that, for most people, is enjoyed with the head, not the heart. Protégé Marc Houle's second full-length is an exercise in negative space, threaded with intentionally (it seems) irritating textures that are more suited to helping you finish the Sunday *NY Times* crossword than start a party. *Bay of Figs'* clinical minimalism is upset by the warm handclaps and funky bounce of "Thirds In Trees," which would sound sublime in any techno set. Houle's sense of melodic humor could leave you pleasantly perplexed. *Rachel Shimp*

IKE YARD
1980-82 COLLECTED

Acute/US/CD

Ike Yard's songs, culled from ostensibly "lost" tapes from the early '80s, intoxicate by locking into mechanized voodoo rhythms, electro-basslines that maraud the streets, and synth noises that resemble hallucinations heard during your tenth consecutive sleepless night. "Loss" and "Half a God" should've been classics for Front 242 and Skinny Puppy to rip off. The only catch is Stuart Argabright's undead-lan Curtis monotone: it can sound fittingly numb and soulless at times, but often grows tiresome. Otherwise, this record is a trove. *Cameron Macdonald*

ISWHAT?
THE LIFE WE CHOOSE

Hyena/US/CD

While Cincinnati may not be first place you'd mine for avant-jazz or hip-hop, Napoleon MC and tenor saxophonist Jack Walker began to flip that script with 2004's *You Figure It Out*. This follow-up continues with a slew of guest musicians contributing to richly diverse performances from Walker (like his interpretation of Zeppelin's "Kashmir") and the poignant lyrical brew of Napoleon. Track by track, the momentum builds; the quick-witted poetic landscape of "Casket" and cool slide of "Ill Biz" prove strongest. Alas, the constant switching between live performance and studio techniques is the album's only hindrance. *Derek Beres*

J DILLA
THE SHINING

BBE/UK/CD

The wait is over for the sadly departed J Dilla's proper follow-up to *Welcome to Detroit*, but at first, it sounds like it might not be worth it. If you can see past the abominable opener, "Geek Down," on which Busta Rhymes spits some high-school-style bravado over a weakish, kazoo-driven beat, then you'll do alright; the lameness is quickly tempered by a particularly strong "E=MC²," with Common on the mic and quirky Jack Nicholson samples bringing up the rear. This *Shining* may not quite rival the brilliant beat tape *Donuts*, but it still manages to hold its own. *Ken Taylor*

JAB MICA OCH EL
ABC HEJ IM COLA

Ache/CAN/CD

Here is a sample list of instruments found on jab mica och el's latest Ache offering: xylophone, recorder, human voice, French horn, triggered pikin sounds (?), saxophone, kazoo-flute, eggs, harmonica, banjo, oboe, whistle, and something called a "gobble." Here is what those instruments, in various permutations and configurations, sound like: the infinite innocence and newness of childhood, the majesty of finding everything interesting, and of loving its freshness. After a while things get a bit too close to baby-wipes and diapers, but the initial sound is about as captivating as birth. *Robbie Mackey*

MARSEN JULES
LES FLEURS

City Centre Offices/GER/CD

In *Einstein's Dreams*, physicist Alan Lightman describes a world where time is circular, each moment lived over and over; and another where time stops, bittersweet at the center. Ambient composer Marsen Jules uses the science of sampling and editing to similarly convey the hypnotic beauty and dual chronology of the natural world. 2005's *Herbstlaub* evoked autumn, and here, sun-washed moments seek infinity through beatless loops and waves. Bell tones, vibraphone hums, and fingers sliding on fret boards are suspended and layered mid-air in the gorgeous "La Digitale Pourpre" and

"Anemone." Closer "Aeillet En Delta" is a 15-minute tease of tones that guarantees gorgeous dreams. *Rachel Shimp*

KASHMERE STAGE BAND
TEXAS THUNDER SOUL 1968-1974

Now Again/US/CD

There's no question, after listening to *Texas Thunder Soul*, that thirty-odd years ago, Houston's Kashmere High School had one of the meanest school bands of all time. The revolving crew of 14-to-18-year-olds rips through funk nuggets like Dennis Coffey's "Scorpio" and Isaac Hayes' "Do Your Thing" (and some originals) as if their last names were Stubblefield, Parker, and Wesley. But does this archaeological dig have to cover two discs, with studio and live versions of many of the same songs? Just sayin'. Essentially, this is highly funky material from high school kids who definitely knew something about jammin' on the one. *Jesse Serwer*

KASKADE
LOVE MYSTERIOUS

Ultra/US/CD

House producer Kaskade doesn't play coy on his third album: From the opening "Stars Align," it's obvious that these big-room, vocal-laden tracks are meant for the dancefloor. The San Francisco-based artist has seen his star rise in recent years, and the man's production skills (like on the guitar-filled "The X"), ear for rhythm ("Sorry," for example, is the kind of track that grooves without getting into a rut), and sheer energy are hard to debate. This won't be the most innovative album of the year, but that doesn't detract from its delightfulness in the slightest. *Luciana Lopez*

LAND SHARK
LAND SHARK

Coco Machete-Om/US/CD

DJ-producer Lance DeSardi brings some solid electro and house to his solo album debut, but solid isn't always enough when he could have pushed it much further. Dancefloor devotees might recognize several tracks here: the synth-driven "Dangerous," with vaguely sleazy male vocals; "Tie Me Up," a thick-bassed house killer with totally sleazy male vocals; and "Slippage," with its somewhat boring monotone. Many of the tracks have a "done that" feel, maybe because DeSardi has actually done them before. For an expectedly edgy, demented album, there's too much that feels like familiar ground. *Luciana Lopez*

LOVE TRIO IN DUB FEAT. U-ROY
LOVE TRIO IN DUB FEAT. U-ROY

Nublu/US/CD

U-Roy's inherent sense of rhythmic playfulness and dub-scat lyrics aren't just the centerpiece of Love Trio's album, but the very genesis of it: Ilhan Ersahin heard U-Roy, the dub riddim-rider champion and unquestioned king of DJs, as a child, and it shaped the bandleader's entire musical future. *Love Trio in Dub* makes great use of U-Roy, but in a 21st-century, downtown New York setting, with Ersahin's sterling synthesizer waves, Tom Waits aficionado Kenny Wolleson's dubbed-out drums, and Brazilian Girls bassist Jesse Murphy's backbone thump morphing into a Turntables on the Hudson-style, post-world-music vibe. *Justin Hopper*

MASTA KILLA
MADE IN BROOKLYN

Nature Sounds/US/CD

Masta Killa turned some heads in 2004 when he delivered *No Said Date*. Though Wu alums RZA, Mathematics, and Choco are jettisoned for external producers Pete Rock, MF Doom, and PF Cuttin, it's essentially more of the same: good enough to impress Wu devotees, but probably too true to early '90s hip-hop for those who've moved on. Purists, however, will revel in the bangin' lead single "Ringing Bells," and the raw drum track that Nature Sounds honcho Dev 1 lays beneath "Brooklyn King." Even in a year saturated with Wu releases, *Made in Brooklyn* is definitely worth a few spins. *Jesse Serwer*

MERZBOW
MINAZO VOLUME ONE

Important/US/CD

Japanese killer Merzbow returns with four more powerful compositions in the name of animal appreciation and liberation. Comprised of captured field recordings from Minazo, a male elephant seal held in captivity in Tokyo until his untimely death in 2005, Masami Akita (a.k.a. Merzbow) colors an urgent sonic palate of subterranean bass, feedback, and distorted samples of the late Minazo that easily seep deeply into the psyche. Unlike some of Merzbow's sporadically screeching avant-noise, *Minazo* manages to keep an ongoing tide of rhythm flowing, accenting his bass grumbles and fuzz from all angles. *Fred Miketa*

MISS VIOLETTA BEAUREGARDE
ODI PROFANUM VULGUS ET ARCEO

Temporary Residence/US/CD

Miss Violetta Beauregarde is a one-woman wrecking ball: a sweaty, Italian mess of hip-hop, grindcore, sex, and savagery swinging straight for your face. Her latest record, the spiny *Odi Profanum Vulgus Et Arceo* (a Latin phrase that loosely translates to "I hate the common crowd and spurn them"), won't win her the attention of hyphy fans, but it might blow the mind of anyone willing to reconsider what hip-hop is, or can be. Like Peaches before her, Miss Violetta's noise-fuck beats drip with femininity. But the aggro Italian is more concerned with breaking your ears than soundtracking Last Night's Party. *Robbie Mackey*

MOTION MAN
PABLITO'S WAY

Threshold/US/CD

True to his name, Motion Man refuses to stand still. He's not nearly the chameleon on the mic that his longtime collaborator Kool Keith is, but there's something to be said about an MC that sounds equally comfortable trading verses with the original rapping pimp Too \$hort or super-lyricist Gift of Gab. With his new album, the animated Motion Man reaffirms his natural versatility, rhyming about the importance of having confidence one moment and his appreciation for big booties the next. But at 20 tracks deep, this album could have benefited from a quick trim. *Max Herman*

MY ROBOT FRIEND
DIAL O

Soma/UK/CD

My Robot Friend positions himself somewhere between the deadpan synthesizer jokiness of Devo and the droll sexual politics of Soft Pink Truth (with a pinch of Hot Chip's

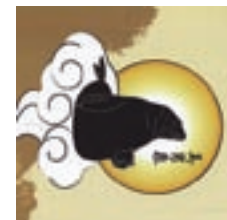
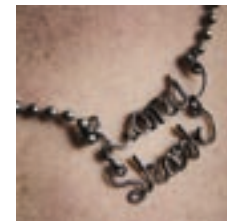


Photo by Lucy Pope

Dani Siciliano

DANI SICILIANO
SLAPPERS

IK7/GER/CD

"If you speak/Speak your mind/Use your head/Not your behind," sings Dani Siciliano on the title track of her second full-length, *Slappers*—though, from the funkiness that follows, you might suspect she only half-believes what she's saying. While her lyrics are full of personal and political contemplation, it's still possible (encouraged, even) to dance to the jazz-jam of "Why Can't I Make You High?" and the subtle 4/4 beats of "Too Young," though it'll probably be around your house rather than at the club. Like her longtime collaborator Matthew Herbert, Siciliano embraces the sampler's infinite possibilities, creating a framework of found sounds that her most powerful instrument—her voice—solidifies and strengthens. Most interestingly, she plays with her personas as sidekick and singular artist (note "Be My Producer," which occasionally exchanges "producer" for "seducer"), proving Siciliano is one of the present moment's most thoughtful and inventive artists. *Rachel Shimp*



false-to Casio-pop) for his sophomore album. *Dial O* delves, with self-aware merriment, into the horny desires of Howard Rigberg's circuit-based alter ego—"Swallow" is a goofy, boy-on-girl-on-machine electro-orgy while "The Good Part" casts Mr. Robot as a sexually frustrated sadbot crooning behind curtains of dark pop melody. Like the neon-rigged automaton suit he dons for live performances, My Robot Friend's music smacks of gimmickry—luckily, it's a smart, mostly listenable trick. *Anna Balkrishna*

MYKA NYNE
CITRUS SESSIONS VOL. 1
Citrus/US/CD

When Myka Nyne was coming up with the Freestyle Fellowship in the early '90s, he was able to stand out in one of L.A.'s all-time best hip-hop crews with his multihued flow, which gradually became as intriguing as his bold poetics. Over a decade later, on the new, jazz-centric project *Citrus Sessions*, he continues to tweak his voice, often coolly crooning over a host of laid-back beats. While his new vocal style is commendable, it's hard not to yearn for a Fellowship reunion when Myka stunningly raps in a double-time flow alongside his old crewmate P.E.A.C.E. on "Viles." *Max Herman*



THE NORTH VALLEY SUBCONSCIOUS ORCHESTRA
THE RIGHT KIND OF NOTHING
Ghostly International/US/CD

Guitarists and laptop explorers Brad Laner (Medicine) and Christopher Willits (Flossin) have entered new, Kraut-friendly ambient territory. Less dreamy than Medicine and much less serene and glitchy than Willits' solo works, *The Right Kind Of Nothing* falls somewhere in the groove of a hazy Cocteau Twins record, but with a barrage of delay and fuzzed-out distortion. Panned samples acting as percussion and epic amounts of guitar loops help create a densely atmospheric record that truly stands out in an overpopulated genre. *Fred Miketa*



Sparklehorse

SPARKLEHORSE
DREAMT FOR LIGHT YEARS IN THE BELLY OF A MOUNTAIN
Astralwerks/US/CD

Continuing a career haunted by chemical imbalance and near-death experiences, Mark Linkous' Sparklehorse resurfaces with *Dreamt For Light Years In The Belly Of A Mountain*. Like 2001's *It's A Wonderful Life*, this record is filled with top-shelf contributions from Christian Fennesz, Danger Mouse, Tom Waits, and the Flaming Lips' Steven Drozd. Despite the big names, however, the collaborators highlight Linkous' penchant for somber masterpieces rather than advertise their own identities. Recorded on a remote North Carolina mountaintop with a vintage recording rig built by the legendary Daniel Flickinger, the record's pristine production enriches the nuances of Linkous' broken pop songs. From the summery glisten of "Don't Take My Sunshine Away" to the mournful arrangement of the self-titled closer, *Dreamt For Light Years* is arguably Sparklehorse's finest moment yet. *Josiah Hughes*

00100
TAIGA
Thrill Jockey/US/CD

Halfway between a drum circle and a fistfight, a coarse beat kicks off *Taiga* before pummeling listeners with guitars jutting in and out, which are then matched by rolls of staccato chants from four fierce women. The eight songs here wash together, spaceless and clean like a well-tuned DJ set, and eventually the little bleats stretch themselves into long riffs of total joy. The open structure is hardly unusual for 00100; their MO has always been ethereality, but this time out they come closer to aural spirituality than ever before. *Matthew Schnipper*

WALE OYEJIDE
AFRICA HOT! THE AFROFUTURE SESSIONS
Shaman Work/US/CD

Nigerian-born producer Wale Oyejide's stated purpose with *Africa Hot!* is a mash-up of funky Lagos Afrobeat sounds, London broken beat riddims (with assistance from Daz-I-Kue), and Brooklyn underground hip-hop production. And he's got it down, musically, as stuttering beats and space-age retro-future synths swirl under fat horn and percussion sections. But while Oyejide hero Fela Kuti's vocal approach was always simple and direct, it was also lyrical in its fiercely political motivation—somehow, the likes of "*Wear a condom/When you pull it out*" seems a good message, but naive in its delivery. Mostly great, but with room to grow. *Justin Hopper*

PIT ER PAT
PYRAMIDS
Thrill Jockey/US/CD

Last year, Pit Er Pat released the freewheeling *Shakey*, an album full of innocent eyes, wary synths, and preschool drums. Much has changed since: trading cheer for spook, and youthful exuberance for paranoia, the band's divinely complete *Pyramids* is the sound of a matured band. Physically enthralling, the record's 11 songs dig into the skin, trading anxious passages for nervous swells and terse verses for tense choruses. *Shakey* was what it felt like to chomp cotton candy and hold hands at the carnival; *Pyramids* is how a murder ballad sounds from the merry-go-round. *Robbie Mackey*

POINT B
A PREVIOUS VERSION OF MYSELF
SCSI-AV/UK/CD

Like long-lived program code, the IDM that delights many hackers has built and patched on so many previous versions of itself that sometimes it sounds (entertainingly) like a creaky, buggy program struggling to boot. Point B codes dub spaciousness, noisy interruptions, buzzing electro, and a cut-and-paste take on club bass into his data, with a mischievous eye towards catchy melodies buried like Easter eggs. *A Previous Version of Myself* peaks with "Figure," a knotty glitch-hop extravaganza that drops slow-moving Hoover swaths behind Prefusion digital phonemes. Music to hack to, or hacked music? *Rob Geary*

PONI HOAX
PONI HOAX
Tigersushi/FRA/CD

What do five French geezers who love disco and rock 'n' roll have in common with Roxy Music? A penchant for naked ladies on album covers and a distinctly European flavor—a little silly, very catchy, and overflowing with feel-good vibes. The Hoaxes show an impressive versatility: Nicolas Ker's deep intonations on "Carrie Ann" could be David Bowie on his best day, while Ker's same vocals set against the disco-pop lines on "Involution Star" pulse and ebb with hard-rockin' moods. Proof that a good producer (here, Joakim Bouaziz of Annie and Air fame) can make all the difference. *Janet Tzou*

PRIMAL SCREAM
RIOT CITY BLUES
Columbia/US/CD

They're no longer raconteurs in the political sense, but the Scream hasn't raised this much hell since 1994's *Give Out But Don't Give Up*. And with the Kills' Alison Mosshart singing backup on tracks like the Stones-y "Dolls," *Riot City Blues* might break down the commercial walls *Give Out* couldn't. The stomp, jangle, and mandolin of "Country Girl" set a relentless pace for Bobby Gillespie's whiskey-soaked tales of "Suicide Sally and Johnny Guitar" and "Junkie Jesus on the cross" ("When the Bomb Drops"—just a few of the characters in his still-psychedelic, slightly blurry world. *Rachel Shimp*

ALICE RUSSELL
UNDER THE MUNKA MOON II
Tru Thoughts/UK/CD

For this installment of vocalist Alice Russell's ongoing collection of collaborations, remixes, and other bits, the poma-jazz Batgirl employs every weapon in her arsenal: From Bugz in the Attic's bloop-funk on dancefloor killer "Could Heaven Ever Be Like This" to the White Stripes (whose "Seven Nation Army" gets devastated, Etta James-style) to the dance-jazz, tailor-made remix of her own "Mirror Mirror on the Wolf." But maybe Russell's boldest, most incendiary moment is the "one-take" straight jazz reading "I Love You More Than You'll Ever Know," on which the queen bee stretches her lungs and stirs the tears right into your Scotch. *Justin Hopper*

SEX MOB
SEXOTICA
Thirsty Ear/US/CD

Martin Denny described his own music as "window dressing," and the pop-jazz quartet Sex Mob takes that concept and runs with it. Their most studio-polished album in the past decade, *Sexotica* is a sly, electronicized homage to Denny's brand of exotica, that airy, pseudo-tropical jazz of the '50s and '60s. A showcase for the slithery slide-trombone work of Steven Bernstein, *Sexotica* weaves and shimmies through a maze of tiki-lit bachelor pads via hypnotic Latin percussion loops and slow-burn instrumentals. *Anna Balkrishna*

SOLENOID
SUPERNATURE
Orac/US/CD

Portland-based IDM composer Solenoid delves into acid experimentation on his fourth full-length, the 303-happy *Supernature*. The results can be spot-on ("Drack Soul," a worthy Robotnick rival) or a little off (its chaser, the hyperactive "Blowatcher"). But as a concept album based on Solenoid's sketchbook thoughts on nanotechnology, genetic engineering, and futuristic battles, the songs don't *have* to be on. They're about a world that's slowly but surely getting fucked, so *Supernature's* union of ambiguous menace and hedonism makes sense. Blinded by science, Solenoid forecasts the future while keeping one ear firmly in 1982. *Rachel Shimp*

SOLLILAQUISTS OF SOUND
AS IF WE EXISTED
Anti/US/CD

With some intelligence and soul, Solillaquists Of Sound's debut proves that modern hip-hop doesn't have to indulge in gimmicks to make noise. Championed by Sage Francis, SOS urgently discusses culture ("Black Guy Peace"), social ills ("Property & Malt Liquor"), and gender issues ("Ur Turn") in an unpretentious fashion. Producer DIVINCI's beats are sprinkled with dynamic changeups driven by hard drums, which compliment MC Swamburger's thoughtful writing without ever cluttering it. Although some of the sung vocals sound out of place at times, *As If We Existed* is ultimately sincere, colorful, and delivered with grace. *David Ma*

ANDY STOTT
MERCILESS
Modern Love/UK/CD

Andy Stott's compositions boast a ghostly character. Over the course of his latest Modern Love offering, 10 sparse songs overflow with substance, but somehow make off like invisible apparitions—a huge accomplishment for a guy who tends toward melodramatic piano scapes and sinewy beat work. But it's all in Stott's touches, a loose approach that allows the music to breathe, assembling itself piecemeal out of a scrap heap of Kranky-ordained minimalist tricks, Detroit techno calling cards, and bump-in-the-night electronics. *Robbie Mackey*

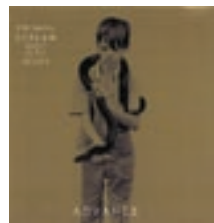
STRANGE FRUIT PROJECT
THE HEALING
Om/US/CD

Named after the Billie Holiday classic, these three MCs (Myth, Myone, S1) from Waco, TX—a town that, in the early 1900s, allegedly lynched more black people than anywhere else in the US—deliver intelligent soul music worthy of Lady Day's blessing. For bitter-sweet, gospel-imbued, ghetto realism check out "Liberation." Dilla's influence permeates on the S1-produced "Ready Forum" and "Good Times," which sounds like UGK invading Slum Village. Easily one of the year's best releases, *The Healing* demonstrates that Texas hip-hop isn't just about candy paint and 22s. *James Mayo*

SUPERIORITY COMPLEX
STAND UP
Bru/US/CD

If you long for the days when hip-hop still had a wry sense of humor, provided a tongue-in-cheek critique of America, and spouted zingy, "did he really just say

that?"-type rhymes, then Superiority Complex is your new favorite group. SC MCs Poisoned Fetus and Iron Monk and producer Blackology might start a new True School era with this flawless album, which even flips A Tribe Called Quest's classic "Butter," music and all. Blackology's beats mix taut, Large Prof-style drums with Jazzy Jeff's melodic sample-ology. The Orlando trio flexes lovely on the Vince Guaraldi-looping "Seasons" and the soul-drenched "Love." *Tomas Palermo*



TOMCRAFT
HYPERSEXYCONSCIOUS
Kosmo/US/CD

The third time's the charm for Munich's Tomcraft (a.k.a. Thomas Bruckner), who has parted ways with partner Eriac. Palled up here with Rolf "Jam El Mar" Ellmer (Jam & Spoon), Tomcraft expands upon tech-house's blueprint. The Prodigy-inspired "Sureshot" replaces "Loneliness" as the TC signature track and the remix maestro gets return love on the pared-down, rapped-up club mix of the bouncy "Da Disco" (Sido and Tai Jason deliver a "Sureshot" redux, MC-style). Teutonic electronics and French 4/4 pop-house reach audio armistice bolstered by spurts of rock-funk guitar and chatty passages. A hook-laden hodgepodge. *Stacy Meyn*



DWIGHT TRIBLE
LIVING WATER
Ninja Tune/UK/CD

Originally a limited-edition release, *Living Water* is now poised to receive its long-overdue credit. From the first notes of the inspirational "Wise One" to the emotive pleading on "Peace," Tribble's gift of gab is poignant and breathtaking. And that's just the acapella tracks; his talented jazz trio (along with other guests) compliments the producer's harmonious energy. In these mad times, Dwight Tribble is an enlightening presence whose songs of humanity say plenty about us all. *Velanche*



Wolf Eyes

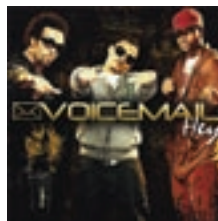
WOLF EYES
HUMAN ANIMAL
Sub Pop/US/CD

With the world-ending, scratch-and-scrape sounds that they purvey, one thinks that Wolf Eyes—the ever-changing noise collective from Ypsilanti, MI—will continue on long after its members are dead and gone. Hell, do any of the original folks still partake anyway? (Answer: yes, Nate Young.) But whether it's the evil, high-pitched din of the title track or the free-jazz-inspired "A Million Years" (they recently jammed with sax legend Anthony Braxton in Victoriaville, Quebec) you get the sense that the Wolf Eyes sound is indeed maturing. Formalism has replaced all-out entropy, as if the boys (with new member, Hair Police's Mike Connelly) are whittling down the mayhem into (not quite) neat little compartments—which, when placed side-by-side, still comprise a brutal, dizzying, high-inducing haze. Still don't get it? Think Fennesz playing an hour of Johnny Thunders covers. *Ken Taylor*



**TRS-80
MYSTERY CRASH**

One Cell Records/US/CD
Despite a near-total lineup change, TRS-80's latest release, full of ambient, beat-driven tracks, sounds as polished as ever. The basslines veer toward the dark and brooding, but the '80s-esque synth layers and reverb-filled percussion keep things from slipping into full-fledged industrial-strength bleakness. Though only Jay Rajeck remains from the original trio, it's obvious that newcomers Mike Barron and Fred de Albuquerque have grasped the baton smoothly. *Luciana Lopez*



**URBAN DELIGHTS
REVOLUTION NO. 1**

Unique/GER/CD
Malte Hagemeister and MC Harry K want to start a revolution by assimilating big beats and rock. To that end, the twosome flexes its artistic muscle, making *Revolution No. 1* hard enough to please both clubbers and rockers. It's a novel approach to the tried-and-true rock-pop song format; engaging vocals, brash guitars, and tight drum work all come through on tracks like "Rock 'n' Roll Star" and "Crash." The revolution is coming! Feel the noise! *Velanche*



**VENETIAN SNARES
CAVALCADE OF GLEE AND DADAIST HAPPY HARDCORE POM POMS**

Planet Mu/UK/CD
Unlike many experimental artists who are lost without song structure, Aaron Funk chooses his quirkiness with precision, skipping over conventional ideas of rhythm and beats. Detroit melodies haunt this Canadian's broken snares like rowdy ghosts, only to plummet into a mad crescendo of carefully phrased noise. "Pwntendo" jumbles and tum-

bles an odd mish-mash of everyday sounds, but it's Funk's emotional pull that stitches his lack of coherence into something appealing. Even amidst dark, horror-film-like overtones and splintered beats, the drum sequence on "Vache" is something stirring—which helps you see past the painful album title. *Janet Tzou*

**VITAMINSFORYOU
THE LEGEND OF BIRD'S HILL**

Intr-ersion/CA/CD
In the three years since *I'm Sorry Forever and For Always*, Vitaminsforyou's Bryce Kushnier has been doing something right. Channeling the serenity of the Canadian prairies into lush compositions, *The Legend of Bird's Hill* is nothing short of a quiet miracle. Like listening to 50 records simultaneously, his marriage of fey techno, pop, and indie rock justifies the guest appearances from Ghislain Poirier and folk singer Emm Gryner. This record just might bridge the gap between Telefon Tel Aviv and Broken Social Scene on your iPod. *Josiah Hughes*

**VOICEMAIL
HEY**

VP/US/CD
Best known for their Bogle tribute "Wacky Dip," Voicemail is a three-piece dancehall unit with a tendency towards R&B/hip-hop crossover à la TOK. *Hey* plays like the follow-up to TOK's *Uncommon Language*. The dancehall anthems like "Bring Ya Body Come" and a remix of their hit "Ready To Party" are catchy and credible. It's just the other stuff on here that's hard to digest. "Crunked" is basically an update of Nelly and Jagged Edge's "Where The Party At," and "One Wish" is a cringe-inducing piano ballad. "Back To Basics" is the best tune here—and a mantra that Voicemail should have followed. *Jesse Server*

**OTTO VON SCHIRACH
MAXIPAD DETENTION**

Ipecac/US/CD
Maybe it's safer to not ask what the noises of copulation, dogs, cows, babies, and a toy drummer gone thrash metal all mean on Otto Von Schirach's "Submarine Mammal Milk." Other monstrosities here, like "Alligator Waltz" and "Tea Bagging the Dead," show how computers can bastardize yet *enhance* heavy metal. Highlights are the old-school noisecore gore of "Three Billion Electron Volts" and "Cantaloupe Syphilis Gravy," a hypothetical meeting of Autechre and Pee Wee Herman. On *Maxipad Detention*, von Schirach indulges his usual psychosexual shtick, but we now know that he has a thing for reptilian women, anyways. *Cameron Macdonald*

**WEIRD WEEDS
WEIRD FEELINGS**

Sounds Are Active/US/CD
Surprisingly charming for an experimental three-piece, Austin, TX band Weird Weeds has perfected its sound on its second outing. Dabbling in indie pop and subdued noise rock equally, *Weird Feelings* lures its listener in with soothing melodies (as on "Broken Arm" or "Cold Medicine") that disintegrate into washy skronk jams within minutes. The three members, who have previously jammed with Jandek, Castanets, and members of Deerhoof, each play an integral role in shaping the record's warm sound. Exploring the line between post-pop and experimental noise, *Weird Feelings* is truly a record that must be heard to be understood. *Josiah Hughes*

**KEITH FULLERTON WHITMAN
TRACK4 (2WAYSUPERIMPOSED)**

Room 40/AUS/CD
Keith Fullerton Whitman is the kind of artist who makes spacious ambient music about as exciting as any shredding death metal anthem or blood-pumping hyphy track. With his roots buried in the soil of *musique concrète*, *Track4 (2Waysuperimposed)* finds Whitman up to some astoundingly complex bi-directional (a 21-minute track plays the same backwards and forwards!) work. As expected, the composition is soaked in micro fuzz and guitar squeals, but it's the sporadic bass that's responsible for swelling heads and dizzy listening. *Fred Miketa*

**WORKING FOR A NUCLEAR FREE CITY
WORKING FOR A NUCLEAR FREE CITY**

Melodic/UK/CD
The sound of Manchester's Working For A Nuclear Free City is a hodge-podge of jangly and noisy indie-pop, electronic music, and cinematic psychedelia—a recipe for either total brilliance or a complete bust. Although the elements sound familiar at first, the songs here are neither tired nor cliché Blighty bop. Rather, everything shimmers with sublimity. "Quiet Place" rolls with the tempo and tone of a long, sullen train journey, while "England" is a timeless, pastoral pop tune unconcerned with London city trends. The rest of the album offers equally anorak-safe Northern drift. Sounds like the work has paid off. *Tomas Palermo*



Lady Sovereign

**LADY SOVEREIGN
PUBLIC WARNING**

Def Jam/US/CD
Making her major-label debut under the wing of Jay-Z has got to put a certain amount of pressure on the young English lass otherwise known as Louise Harman. But Lady Sov proves that she can hang with the best of 'em. The big-name collabos didn't pan out (so no Ad-Rock or Missy productions), but Sov mainstay Medasyn still manages to bring the grimy-good beats to *Public Warning*. The intentionally polarizing single, "Love Me or Hate Me," which sees Sov blasting edicts like "If you love me, then/Thank you/If you hate me, then/Fuck you!" rides on a plunky, descending synth line while the hard-hitting "Gatheration" is heavy with electro-bass and handclaps. But it's Sov's witty lyrics and true sense of herself that hopefully will propel the Londoner into the hearts of young America. As she states strongly, she "can only be one thing/And that's be Lady Sovereign." *Jake Tisdale*



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Surface Magazine

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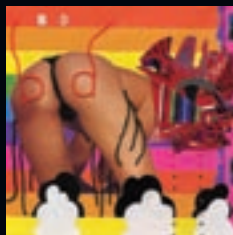


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Tiefschwarz
fabric 29
Out Now

'Fabric 29' is the sound of a city—a deep, driving house mix sent straight from the heart of Berlin's agenda-setting club-scene. Features tracks from Claude VonStroke, Riton, M.A.N.D.Y. and Tiefschwarz themselves.



Cut Copy
FABRICLIVE. 29
Out Now

One of the hottest bands around take charge of FABRICLIVE.29 and mash together tracks from the likes of Joakim, New Young Pony Club, Goldfrapp and Soulwax. Cut Copy dish out a winding, blinding trip through the biggest sounds in electro, disco, indie, house and rock.



Rub-N-Tug
fabric 30
Available 10.03.06

'fabric 30' is the new mix from New York's premier party-starters, Rub 'n' Tug. Capturing the sweat-stained spirit of their incendiary DJ sets at the London club, it's a typically twisted selection of spaced-out sounds, including tracks from Claude VonStroke, Mocky and Sir Drew - good time vibes and late night beats. Let's get busy!



Stanton Warriors
FABRICLIVE. 30
Available 11.14.06

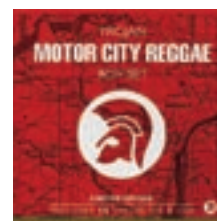
Breakbeat heroes the Stanton Warriors get down and dirty on FABRICLIVE.30, a booty shaking mix featuring spank rock, booka shade, freeform five and several of their own fiery remixes. Beats bounce and basslines throb throughout this bumping collection.

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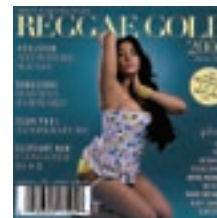


Tanya Stephens



**JAMAICA'S LOVE FOR THE MOTOWN
HIT MACHINE, THEN AND NOW**

MOTOR CITY REGGAE
Trojan-Sanctuary/US/CD



REGGAE GOLD 2006
VP/US/CD

In the '60s, the Motown sound revolutionized American pop music. Never before had black music been so accessible, so hook-laden, so ripe for crossing over to white audiences. But while Motown's influence on R&B, funk, and rock has been extremely well documented, somewhat lesser known is the impact the label and its artists had on Jamaican music. That might all change with the release of *Motor City Reggae*, a limited-edition three-CD set culled from the vaults of the almighty Trojan label.

Motown's warm harmonies and tight arrangements filtered across the American radio landscape around the same time that Jamaican pop was beginning to transition from rocksteady into early reggae; the signal from Miami stations could be picked up on the islands, and soul 45s from the States became a hot import commodity in Jamaica, as did cover versions of those tunes. It may be eye-opening for some to realize that Jamaican standards like "I Want A Love I Can Feel" (whose riddim was later recycled for Tony Rebel's "Fresh Vegetable," among others) is practically a note-for-note cover of Smokey Robinson's "I Want A Love I Can See," performed on *Motor City Reggae* by Jackie Edwards. The boxed set's other 49 tracks not only offer a different take on well-worn sounds, but the laid-back, loping grooves—first recorded by Smokey Robinson, Diana Ross, The Temptations, and Marvin Gaye, and versioned here by Cornell Campbell, John Holt, Slim Smith, Jimmy Riley, Alton Ellis, The Heptones, and others—offer a glimpse into lovers-rock heaven. What's especially cool about *Motor City Reggae* is that it goes deeper into the Motown oeuvre than the classic but predictable hits found on the soundtrack to the film *The Big Chill*. You'll find reggae-fied versions of "Get Ready," "Ain't That Peculiar," "My Girl," and "Let's Get It On," but also less-famous songs like "Your Kiss is Sweet," "Born to Love You," "My World is Empty Without You," and "Since I Lost You," all treated with the same reverence.

In 2006, the dancehall sound out of Jamaica has taken on Motown-sized proportions, influencing international genres from bhangra to dubstep to hip-hop, and maintaining a steady progression of infectious, danceable music that's crossed over from its core audience to a wider (and whiter) crowd. This year's *Reggae Gold* offers an appealing package, with a cover designed to look like a glossy women's fashion magazine, an elaborate booklet featuring

succulent models, and a bonus DVD.

Appropriately, the comp starts out with Sean Paul's "Temperature," and as overexposed as S.P. seems to be these days, you can't hate him for making club anthems hardcore enough for the *shottas*, yet smooth enough for the ladies. In a sense, he's the Smokey or Marvin of dancehall, a consistent presence both on the charts and in your heart. *Reggae Gold's* remaining 17 songs offer an assortment of recent hits from TOK, Macka Diamond, Gyptian, Assassin, Wayne Wonder, Tanya Stephens, Richie Spice, Elephant Man, Da'Ville, and more.

Since *RG* is designed for the crossover contingent, it makes sense that R. Kelly's "Slow Wine" remix (featuring Sean Paul and Akon) is sandwiched in-between Tony Matterhorn's "Dutty Wine" and TOK's "Hotta." But trainspotters should take a good listen to the lyrics of Spice's classic "Youths Dem Cold"—still the hottest song on the Truth & Rights riddim—which ponders the reality of ghetto youths "searching for food for the pot," who'll "do anything to fill that void." If "Temperature" is the '06 version of "You've Really Got a Hold On Me," then "Youths Dem Cold" is the modern-day equivalent of "Message From a Black Man." *Eric K. Arnold*

**Comp
Reviews
10.06**



Ryuichi Sakamoto

RYUICHI SAKAMOTO: BRICOLAGES

Kab/US/CD
Having won critical acclaim with his last release, *Chasm*, Ryuichi Sakamoto has upped the ante by passing along the material to 13 remixers from across the electronic-music spectrum. In one of the disc's most accessible moments, Taylor Deupree's reworking of "World Citizen" (with elegant vocals by David Sylvian) adds glitch while preserving the dark pop feel of the original. Another fine point is the inclusion of two different remixes of the starkly beautiful "20 msec.," one by film-score composer Craig Armstrong and another by guitar-ambient surrealist Fennesz. Both mixes are austere gracefulness; Armstrong takes a more conventional approach to song structure while Fennesz, though toning down his trademark searing, still turns in a powerful, melodramatic interpretation. Of the few low points, mixes of "Undercooled" and "War and Peace" feel a bit tired, maybe due more to the spoken-word-over-electronic cliché of the originals than the remixes themselves. *Alexander Posell*



BELLY OF THE WHALE

Important/US/CD
While *Belly of the Whale* provides some interesting manipulations and solid programming from the likes of Kim Cascone, Scanner, and Yannick Dauby, too much of the content either employs its exotic, spiny lobster-and-orca samples as a pointless backdrop, or passes off overindulgent, Ableton-esque effects as calculated sonic expression. All conceptual wankery and Greenpeace propaganda aside, Merzbow's contribution, which sounds like the cast of *Finding Nemo* being pureed in a cocktail blender, definitely brings some much needed balance to the album. Two chin-strokes and it's over. *Doug Morton*

CASSY: PANORAMABAR 01

Ostgut/GER/CD
Cassy Britton is a resident DJ at Panoramabar and this 24-track mix pays tribute to the Berlin club. *Panoramabar 01* snags your attention with intelligent track choices and subtle shifts in mood and rhythm. The disc emphasizes basslines that raise spirits and libidos, and unusual textural exploration. Cassy's mix gracefully combines serious tonal science with verging-on-peak-time euphoria—a tough balance to achieve. With a set including cuts by Melchior Productions, Ricardo Villalobos, DBX, Ø, Mathias Kaden, V/A, NSI, Auto-Repeat, and many more worthies, Cassy proves herself to be an uncompromisingly fantastic selector. *Dave Segal*

CONSPIRACY UNCOVERED

Tuningspork/NETH/CD
Continuing to help define minimal tech-house here and abroad, the folks at Amsterdam's Tuningspork deliver standard progressions while forcing the envelope of the quirky click-house sound. This assembly of the catalog's releases nicely represents their trademark bass-throbbing, static-twitching minimalism. Artists such as Dan Curtin, Samim, and Shyza Minelli provide flavors ranging from bass-heavy party thrillers to vocal-fused electro-tech. Falko Brockspieper's "Hardwired" features futuristic impressions, experimental arrangements, and extreme, sentiment-evoking moments. Michal Ho's "Kiss the Wasp" and "Steam Engine Sex" carry more traditional minimal ideas, with square-wave synth loops, time-based effects, and heaps of post-production edits. *Praxis*

ANDREW EMIL PRESENTS FOUR PLAY MUSIC

Forever Soul-EsNtion/US/CD
DJ/producer Andrew Emil wears Chicago's influence proudly on this disc, a mix of tracks from Emil's four play label. The house is heavy on the beats and light on the vocals, with moments of genuinely tight groove. But while the tracks are well done, the first half could benefit from more variety and sharper pacing. The mixing, as well, might use a bit of subtlety. A few tracks stand out—like Emil's "CTF (Nick Santillan Dub)," with its warm, dubby female vocal, and the bouncy, bass-happy "Rockument" by Pat Nice and JRod—but overall the compilation needs more range. *Luciana Lopez*

FABRIC 29: TIEFSCHWARZ

Fabric/UK/CD
Stuttgart's infamous tech-house brethren Tiefschwarz reinforce Fabric's mix series with a 14-track selection that's as filthy as they come. Firing it up with Louderbach's "Grace," the pressure builds up through some choice gritty numbers from Claude Vonstroke, Night On Earth, GummiHz, and their own remix of Depeche Mode's "John the Revelator" before a superbly downshifted exit through Roman Flugel's reworking of Kate Wax's "Beetles and Spiders." It's not like their seamless mixing talent needs to be emphasized here, so suffice it to say all that's missing from the *Fabric 29* experience is an oxygen-depleted dancefloor and some overpriced drinks. *Doug Morton*

FEAR OF A DIGITAL PLANET

Vinyl Republik/CAN/CD
Canada sounds like a vibrant place on Vinyl Republik's (dare we say) nation-defining comp, *Fear of a Digital Planet*. Gathering the label's most promising artists—along with a handful of VR's Great White North cohorts—*Fear* is a diverse monster: part electro-gaze, part mini-house, and part nasty club bang. Toronto duo Original Recipe opens with the whirring lounge-fuzz and bass-thud of "The Chase," while Andrew Duke closes up shop with the techno-jog of "Dirty Sugar Water." Everything in between makes for a spotless comp, shooing missteps with a consummate cast that bodes incredibly well for Canada's future. *Robbie Mackey*

GREETINGS FROM VERMONT

Tru North/US/CD
From a land where moose act as highway billboards and pint glasses are filled with Grade B maple syrup, a college town's subculture thrives on suburban hip-hop. Compiling over 24 local Burlington, VT artists, veteran Fattie-B masters and mixes these raw tracks into a true Green Mountain mixtape. Featuring The Loyalists, Darnell Burners, The Aztext, DJ Russell, J2, Daddy Rich, and Dakota, sounds range from old-school, 808-boom-type rap to contemporary, smooth-flow style. A nice survey of what Church Street, Club Nectar's, and backwoods hipsters are developing in the studio. *Praxis*

HOUSE OF OM: COLETTE & DJ HEATHER

OM/US/2CD
Two of Chicago house's heavy hitters take time out from their 300-plus appearances each year to deliver the one-and-a-two for OM. Colette's disc sparkles with bubbly vocals (including her own classically trained voice) on gems from Rockers Revenge, Greenskeepers, Bryan Jones, and label mates Andy Caldwell and Kaskade. Conversely, DJ Heather's instrumental disc gets funky and deep and works texture with brisk beats from Mark Farina (with Kaskade), Dopeheadz, TradeMarq, Mr. Jones, and features her own delights like "Picture of You" as well. *Stacy Meyn*

KILL THE DJ: INTRODUCING THE DYSFUNCTIONAL FAMILY—A MIXED-UP COMPILATION BY CHLOE ET IVAN SMAGGHE

Kill the DJ/FRA/CD
"I don't want to be like everybody else," bemoans a voice on Egoexpress' "The Fool Of The New City," and such words could be taken as a manifesto for Chloe 'n' Ivan's *Mixed-Up* comp. Apparently soundtracking a club where "no style is style [and] no gender is

gender," the French duo weaves its way through eerie carousel music (Planningtorock's "Death Dream"), odd-folk paeans to opiates (Jason Edwards' "Codeine"), anxious bump-tech (Louderbach's "Grace (Anxiety)"), and post-Boards of Canada atmospherica (Point B's "After Burns") to entertain their dysfunctional kith and kin. *David Hemingway*

KAMMERFLIMMER KOLLEKTIEF REMIXED

Staubgold/GER/CD
Germany's Kammerflimmer Kollektief aren't post-rockists; they're the second coming of Kraut rock in the style of Neu! and Amon Düül. Their liquid, improvised, cinematic avant-jazz-rock is confounding, mysterious, and often rewarding. Put these sounds in the blender with IDM's finest (David Last, Radian, Jan Jelinek) and the results can only be chin-strokingly remarkable. Things get cooking three tracks in with Nôze's rhythmic "Lichterloh" rework. Then clicky, Herbert-esque beats ignite KK's broken piano and mournful horn arrangements before Jelinek turns the group's slow jazz into invisible audio ghosts, and Sutekh flips the dial to extreme sub-bass and crackle mode. *Tomas Palermo*

KYOTO JAZZ MASSIVE: 10TH ANNIVERSARY

Compost/GER/CD
Both Compost and KJM generally put out quality material, but for the doubters, check the other names on this two-disc set: Kenny Dope, Louie Vega, Monday Michiru, and Da Lata. The lineup makes for a simply outstanding collection. Brothers and acid jazz DJs/producers Shuya and Yoshihiro Okino celebrate their anniversary with remixes of their work, as well as covers and tributes from other musicians. The results include KJM's "Shine," first remixed by Dope, then recreated by Jazztronik into a stripped-down mix of beats and chopped vocals that ends with a burst of warmth. A consistently excellent compilation. *Luciana Lopez*

DAMIAN LAZARUS AND MATTHEW STYLES: GET LOST

Crosstown Rebels/UK/CD
Unlike other mixes for his Crosstown Rebels imprint, *Get Lost* finds label chief-cum-DJ Damian Lazarus (and his CR compadre Matthew Styles) gliding through multiple takes on smooth minimalism. Lazarus is known for fusing electro and rock influences into his house and tech-house mixes, but *Get Lost* hearkens back to the fleeting mid-'90s rave daze. Ost & Kjex's "How not to be a Biscuit" pulses with the kind of throbbing, spongy bass you'd see girls worshipping speakers for, while Trickski's "Sunshine F**k/Part 1" strips a beat down to its most rhythmic essentials. Where my glowstick at? *Janet Tzou*

THE OBLIQSOUND REMIXES VOLUME 2

ObliqSound/GER/CD
The people at ObliqSound would like you to focus on this CD's packaging, created by industrial designer Karim Rashid. But you, astute reader, just want to get the skinny on the music within. The second volume of remixes from the German label offers more than just a sleek look. An impressive array of producers draw the shapes: Atjazz, Nuspirit Helsinki, and Domu go for deep and groovy mixes that put each at the top of his respective game. Thumbs up on the whole package, inside and out. *Velanche*

OPTIMO: PSYCHE OUT

Eskimo/BEL/CD
Scotland's acclaimed DJs Twitch and Jonnie Wilkes have shunned their tech-house guise in favor of a danceable psyche-rock compilation. Featuring stoner anthems from many generations, these 24 bangers could satiate house-party Hessians and crazed club kids alike. *Psyche Out* begins with a bass-driven Hawkwind jam, proceeds through an 808-dominated Carl Craig remix of Throbbing Gristle, and somehow finds solace in The Temptations' "Poppa Was A Rollin' Stone." Without any psychedelic clichés or predictable mixes, Optimo maintains a wholly transcendent tone with textured samples, analog fuzz, and an incessant groove that displays the duo's matured dance mastery. *Fred Miketa*

RAINBOW SOUL: VOLUME ONE

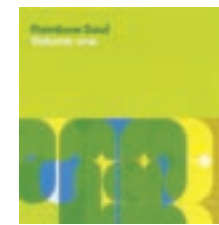
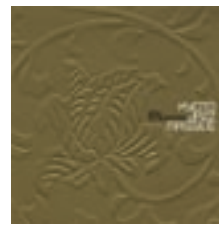
Phuture Lounge/UK/CD
Manchester neo-soul/broken beat label Phuture Lounge has come out the gate like a rocket, off and into the stars. Backed by production duo Phuturistix, the label boasts a stable of brilliant but unknown artists from the UK, Germany, and even San Francisco. PL takes the "soul" in their comp's title literally; silky R&B cuts abound, including Hamburg-based Oezlem's Patrice Rushin-inspired "New Era"—gorgeous! The bouncy funk of Fyza's "Summer Groove" will satisfy IG Culture fans, and Mr. J takes you between the sheets with his "Intergalactic Love Affair." Vintage Philly and Chicago soul inspires as this spaceship takes us all higher. *Tomas Palermo*

RHYTHM & SOUND: SEE MI YAH REMIXES

Burial Mix/GER/CD
For this outing, Rhythm & Sound (German producers Mark Ernestus and Moritz von Oswald) invites a cadre of free-spirited techno heavyweights to rework assorted Jamaican vocal tracks. Carl Craig injects rhythmic space and squelching effects to Bobbo Shanti's "Poor People Must Work" while Substance micro-dubs singer Sugar Minott. François K casts vocalist Rod of Iron in drum & bass armor and Vladislav Delay makes Freddy Mellow feel cozy in his velvety beats. The album isn't for dub purists; Rhythm & Sound takes a reggae foundation and builds a modern, echo-soaked edifice that would make Frank Gehry smile. *Tomas Palermo*

TOMMIE SUNSHINE & MARC ROMBOY: SYSTEMATIC SESSIONS VOLUME TWO

Systematic/GER/CD
After Atlanta *enfant terrible* Tommie Sunshine co-wrote "Silver Screen (Shower Scene)" with Felix da Housecat, he developed from glitzy kitten to bristly electronicist, as exhibited by the strated, acid-zigzagged grooves on his contribution to this two-CD mix. Sunshine's legacy, however, can be heard through Andrea Doria's "Deep Throat," as well as "Body Jack (Radio Slave Remix)" on Systematic label head Marc Romboy's second disc. This CD, like Romboy's own productions, comfortably straddles the pecks and pocks of Chicago, Detroit, Berlin, and Cologne and provides an enveloping, ketaminimal contrast to Sunshine's gurgling electro-house. *Tony Ware*



Michael Mayer

TOTAL 7

Kompakt/GER/CD
It's *Total* time again, and the Kompakt camp is as techno fabulous as ever. From the feel-good, big-room bumpery of label vets Michael Mayer, The Modernist, and Superpitcher to the tape-delayed dub of Mikkell Metal and string-laden atmospherics of Jonas Bering, this compilation is a window into the label's seasoned and beautiful techno soul. Diverse yet familiar, playful yet superbly sophisticated, the music never seems to waver in its ability to revitalize the dancefloor atmosphere. And while Wasserman (comprised of label heads Wolfgang Voigt and Jurgen Paape) captures Kompakt's classic spirit perfectly with "In Tyrannis 2006," it's fresh input from K2 sub-label recruits Gui Boratto, Steadycam, Robert Babicz, and HUG that will reassure even the staunchest Kompakters out there that the label is as positive and steadfast in their vision as they were eight years ago. *Doug Morton*



Down-beat Diaspora
by Rico
"Superbizzee"
Washington
GETTING YOU UP ON THE SHARPEST SOUL,
FUNK, AND R&B



Georgia Anne Muldrow (photo by B.E.)



Stephanie McKay (photo by B.E.)

Chello, babies! Hope y'all had hot fun in the summertime. As for my life in the sunshine, it was mostly spent cleanin' all the melted wax off my decks. This summer was sticky-icky! But now all the leaves are brown and the sky is grey. Never fear, though. Your main man has got some sunny sounds in his goodie bag for you to check!

After years spent crooning behind folks like **Kelis**, **Amp Fiddler**, **Roy Hargrove**, and **DJ Spinna**, NYC songbird **Stephanie McKay** has joined forces with the interstellar Astralwerks Records for a full-length album due at the top of '07. But for now, feast your ears on her five-track EP, on shelves this month!

Eighties maven of style, dance, and song **Jody Watley** is celebrating 30 years in the biz with a long-overdue makeover. Featuring track work by **4hero**, **Ron Trent**, **King Britt**, and **DJ Spinna**, her ninth album, *The Makeover* (Avtone), boasts face-lifts of her own classics as well as the likes of Madonna's "Borderline" and Diana Ross' "Love Hangover." Check the *Soul Train* montage clip on YouTube to peep her back-in-the-day dancin'-machine skills.

The mothership has officially landed. **SA-RA's** 12" funky flying saucer, "Hollywood," is the first appetizer from their long-awaited, much-anticipated, major-label debut, *Black Fuzz* (G.O.O.D./Sony). A few of you may be up on the original version (recorded for **Bilal's** stillborn sophomore album) floating around in cyberspace, but trust that this version bumps too!

Scion, the makers of fly urban rides, is now in the record biz, folks! Yep, you heard me right! Their latest release is a limited, three-track, promo-only 12" by Los Angeles-based electro-world music collective **Rhythm Roots All-Stars** (Scion A/V), featuring the chops of **Aloe Blacc**, **Afrodisiac Soundsystem**, and a dope-ass re-twerk of Prince's "I Would Die 4 U" by **Raheem DeVaughn**. And while we're on the Left Coast, don't forget to check for **Georgia Anne Muldrow's** bangin' 12" "Leroy" (Stones Throw).

Word on the street is that there are six 12" white labels floating around sporting the name **The Motown Acapellas**, featuring crisp, clean, clear, classic vocal tracks. Simon says prepare yourself for the onslaught of horrid mash-ups guaranteed to assault all five of your senses! Ha!

In other news, **Platinum Pied Pipers** are readying the *Bling 47* compilation *The War LP* for U.K. label Fat City, featuring cuts by **Invincible**, **Tiombe Lockhart**, and other *Bling 47* folk. Blue Note Records is reportedly wooing Southern chanteuse **Alice Smith** in hopes of releasing her stalled debut album *For Lovers, Dreamers & Me*, previously scheduled for release on BBE. Previously slated for release by **Masters At Work's Kenny Dope** on his Kay Dee imprint, Traffic Entertainment has finally released the collection of gems by early '80s R&B/dance producer and P&P Records expat **Gary Davis** entitled *Chocolate Star: The Very Best of Gary Davis*.

Well, that's my time. Hope that was enough funky music to keep you movin' and groovin' 'til next time!



En Tu Casa
by Nick Chacona
HOUSEKEEPING, FROM TECH AND MINIMAL
TO DEEP AND TRADITIONAL



Josh Heath



Locodice

As we in the northern hemisphere finally feel the global cool-down known as fall, house music is following the climactic patterns of the lands down under. Labels from across the house spectrum of subgenres are poised for a barrage of more-than-memorable releases.

Berlin homeboy **Sasse** (the man behind Moodmusic and God knows how many other labels) has been quite the busy bee with a number of singles and a full-length album this year. This fall, Sassomatic (another one of his pseudonyms) will present the world with a new two-track single, "That Side of the Moog" b/w "Vortex" on Henrik Schwarz's Sunday Music, that keeps in line with his balanced mixture of organic and synthetic production values. (Full disclosure: I've got a record coming out with Sasse myself. See Apocalypse Now for some shameless plug action courtesy of the Dankman.)

Minimal tech-house man of the moment **Locodice** has graced **Josh Wink's** Ovum label with yet another rolling, synth-driven house monster in the form of "Flight LB7475." On the flip side, "El Gayo Negro" is a deeper affair, again taking its time to build up the vibe for late-night aural consumption.

Typically, many records above 130 bpm are not found in house bins or pages at your local shop or website, but I'm going to go out on a limb here to mention the new EP from **ICAN** on **Carl Craig's** boundary-busting Planet E label. **Santiago Salazar** and **Esteban Adame**, both of whom are members of the **Underground Resistance** outfit **Los Hermanos**, have put together four speedy, tracky rhythms that would sound right at home in a chunky techno set, but given their arrangements, organic instrumenta-

tion, and the fact that, in my opinion, they are serious house groovers when pitched down, they could also cause some massive dancefloor damage in an adventurous house set.

The dance music enigma known as **Cajmere** (or **Green Velvet** to some) has been a busy A&R guy lately with two knock-out house bangers on Relief set to drop right in a row. First up will be *Relentless Muzik Vol. 1* by **Jerome Baker**, who produced a number of records for the label in the mid-'90s, and what a classic Chicago hard-house assault of cut-up samples and maxed-out 909s it is. With titles like "Move Them Hips," "That Biness," and "The Hop," this single truly gets down to biness and does not let up until the grooves run flat. The second EP, *Primitive Cypher*, is a split collaboration between Chicago's **DJ Traxx** and Detroit's Ghostly/Spectral boys **Tadd Mullinix** and **D'Marc Cantu**. All three cuts are as raw, rugged, and jacking as extra-terrestrially possible.

Closing on the sunny side of the house spectrum, Salted Records, the ever-expanding label headed by **Miguel Migs**, has a bright future ahead with newcomer **Josh Heath's** *Cold Cuts* EP and **Li'sha Project's** *All Night High*. If you prefer your house finely polished in a 21st-century jazz-funk fashion then keep a key ear open for this crew.



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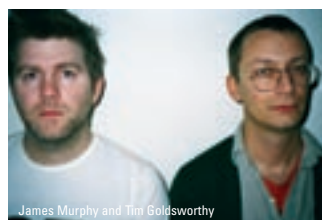


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Apocalypse Wow
by Roy Dank
TRAVERSING TIME AND SPACE IN SEARCH
OF ODDBALL DISCO GOODIES



It just wouldn't be right if I didn't kick this installment of the column off with some treats from Berlin. Lo and behold, **Henrik Schwarz** descends from the skies above with "Imagination Limitation," a ridiculously inventive take on the house music paradigm if I ever heard one. Delivered in three parts over one 12", this gorgeous piece of work is culled from the man's eagerly anticipated *DJ-Kicks* mix on !K7.

While I'm on the subject of compelling mix discs, Berlin's **Kaos** teams up with **Sal Principato** from **Liquid Liquid** again for *Collector Series Pt. 2: Danse, Gravité Zéro*. Kudos for the inclusion of **Fist of Facts'** "Fugitive Vesco," Sal P's rarely heard post-LL project, as well as **Daniel Wang's** cult classic, "Like Some Dream (I Can't Stop Dreaming)," which seems to be undergoing a bit of a renaissance these days. Wang's long been an iconoclast, so it's no surprise that rumors abound of his releasing disco versions of Bach and Debussy sometime this fall.

The mysterious folks behind the recently launched Mindless Boogie label have been mining a different sort of disco as well. Keep your eyes and ears peeled for a particularly killer edit called "Faith Dealer." On an altogether different plane of reissue labels is the Brooklyn-based Minimal Wave imprint. Recent release *The Lost Tapes* is a compilation of cassette-only—yes, cassette!—releases on vinyl, boasting the likes of **Portion Control**, **Unovoidal**, and **Neon Judgment**, amongst other totally obscure European synth-wave bands from the '80s. Bless their hearts for putting out this vinyl-only treat.

With a nod to the industrial days of yore, **Black Dice** drops the vaguely dance-y "Manoman." However, the real juice emanating from the **DFA** camp continues to come from the label dons themselves. Their stellar take on **Captain's** "Frontline" continues their run of epic remix work. After years of anticipation and speculation, **Tim Goldsworthy** debuts his solo nom de plume **The Loving Hand** with four most excellent mixes of **Home Video's** "Penguin."

Fellow *XLR8R* columnist and rising nu-disco star **Nick Chacona** seems to be having his moment right now. Beyond dropping the massive cosmic disco banger "Through The Door" on 20:20 Vision, his long-awaited "Leo" finally sees release on Moodmusic, backed with a Sassomatic mix. Stay tuned for "The Fog," his collabo with Sasse that is sure to turn heads. Keep 'em coming, Nick!

On a similar sorta tip comes **Magnus International**, the latest and greatest signing to **Prins Thomas'** Full Pupp imprint. B-side "Onkel Reisende Mac" has the kind of synths you could just lay down and die to. And don't ya just love those wacky Norwegian disko titles! Thomas' fellow Viking **Todd Terje** doesn't have the luxury of choosing the titles of his remixes, but he does land himself on an incredibly well named label. The relatively new, Munich-based Permanent Vacation reels in both Terje and **Joakim** for mixes of **Antena's** "Camino del Sol." Joakim comes through *big* time with what may well be the remix of the year.

Last but certainly not least, Apocalypse Wow comes alive on the interweb every Tuesday night from 12 midnight 'til 2 a.m. EST on www.eastvillageradio.com. Tune in and check out what I'm making a fuss about in this here column.



Oddball Disco Guest Reviews:
In Flagranti

Together, Swiss expats Sasa Crnobrnja and Alex Gloor (now based in NYC) make up In Flagranti, one of the most powerful, taste-making forces in the nu-disco scene. From running their own Codek imprint (which releases primarily their music but once in a while that of Freddie Mas, G. Rizo, and a few others) to touring the globe, Crnobrnja and Gloor still manage to do a fair share of recording and remixing. Their debut full-length, *Wronger Than Anyone Else*, is the stuff of Studio 54 dreams: funky, soul-kissed, sexed-up, electro'd-out, '70s-styled floor rockers that make you wanna dance, smoke, drink, and fuck all at the same time. In between countless gigs in the US, Europe, and Australia, Crnobrnja takes a moment to show us the gems floating around in the duo's record bags. *Derek Grey* www.codek.com

SEBASTIAN ROSS ROSS ROSS

Ed Banger/FRA/12
Wasn't sure if this one fits into the Oddball Disco files, but I had to mention it. I received it just a day before a gig and had no chance to check it out. In the heat of the night, I quickly listened to it in my headphones (I like surprises) and then just mixed it in to the set... Wow! The b-side, "Walkman," is a floor killer! The crowd went mental. A-side is good, too; just had no chance to play it out yet. *Sasa Crnobrnja*

EBBRO TRE

Lucy Lee/FRA/12
Ebbro is the new project of Gianluca Pandullo (I-Robots) and Patrick di Stefano. Fit for the dancefloor but deeply rooted in early German electro and '70s Krautrock. Side b is a remix by Pier Bucci. He keeps a similar vibe but more on the electro side. Both tracks are very nice... I like the delay effects on the guitar. *Sasa Crnobrnja*

DONDOLO DRAGON

Tiny Sticks/UK/12
It's cool to receive promo vinyl, but at the same time, I only end up liking three out of every 10. That's why I was happy with this one, and out of three tracks I am definitely going to play two. I don't know much about the artist but the choice of remixers is hot. Brennan Green and Shit Robot—you can't go wrong with them. Top label, too! *Sasa Crnobrnja*



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Teki Latex



Traxxamillion

Good googly moogly!

When I casually dropped the name of *Sanford & Son's* Whitman "Grady" Mayo in this here column a few issues back, I had no idea that one of my favorite ig'nant rappers had just dropped a single inspired by Grady, one of my all-time favorite TV characters (or at least inspired by one of his catchphrases). I'm a little late on the ball here but "Good Googly Moogly" (Columbia) from newly paroled **Project Pat** is pure fiyah. Even with the South monopolizing hip-hop radio, this track's managed to stay under the Mason-Dixon line like it was 1995, but with its Hypnotize Minds production and slightly retarded yet insanely memorable hook ("Good googly moogly/That thang is juicy"), it's bound to bubble up.

With its slow-and-low snap production and so, so timely combination of hyphy and skateboard aesthetics, **The Pack's** "Vans" (Jive) seems almost too good to be true, as if some marketing guru took every emerging trend in hop-hop and rolled it into one. In fact, I was sure this was a commercial for Vans sneakers when I first heard it. I'm told that it originated as a MySpace phenomenon, and that the teen-aged MCs embracing the cheap skate shoe is a subtle but powerfully anti-bling move, but I'm still skeptical. It's a catchy song, so prove me wrong.

Traxxamillion, the producer of Keak Da Sneak's "Super Hyphy" (one of my favorite hip-hop singles of the past two years), just dropped an album called *The Slapp Addict* and the lead single is "Sideshow," featuring **Too Short** and **Mistah FAB** (Slapp Addict). Traxx is dope because, unlike a lot of these new-jack producers who just noodle on the keys, he really knows his way around the synthesizer. If this were 25 years ago, he'd be in a band like Kleeer instead of making hyphy radio anthems.

Taking things to the East for a minute is "Watch how It Go Down" b/w "Think It Over" 12" (Brick) from Lawrence, MA's **Termanology**. I've been hearing a lot about this Puerto Rican newcomer but wasn't really feeling the mixtapes earlier this year. Now I'm sold: The a-side finds the young MC hooking up with a fatherly **DJ Premier** while the b co-bills **Ghostface** protégé **Trife Da God** over a buttery, soulful **Statik Selektah** beat. Feeling this.

Q-Tip's *Live at the Renaissance* is probably never coming out (dude should have called it *Kamaal The Abstract 2*) but a six-track *Live at the Renaissance Sampler* recently emerged on white label. Tip's weird singing and the **Andre 3000** collabo "That's Sexy" notwithstanding, joints like "I'm not Gone Have It" and "Fever" sound exactly like they should: classic **Tribe** updated to the current era, Ummah-ish beats, and extra-nasal vocals.

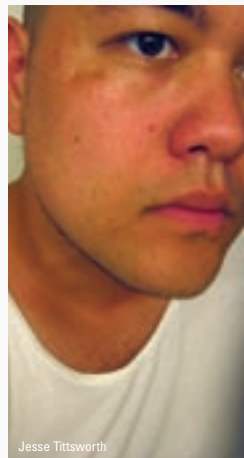
Finally, from the "Is this rap?" department, comes "Disco Dance With You" (Virgin France/Institubes), the debut single by **TTC's Teki Latex**. This is essentially a revisionist Eurodisco record (with some slightly more tasteful remixes from Parisian production unit **VV** and **Spankrock's XXX Change**) but Teki is in a rap group and I'm loving this so I'm bigging it up. Also included is "Electronic," a lighthearted marriage of Daft Punk vocoders and '80s freestyle that's not too far off from what TTC was doing on their *Batards Sensibles* record. Did I tell you it's about iPods? As Teki says, put your white headphones on.



Basic Needs
by Kid Kameleon
LOW-END NECESSITIES, FROM RAGGA TO DUBSTEP AND BEYOND



David Last



Jesse Tittsworth



Elemental

Odd that I would find myself in Berlin for this issue and yet the majority of the tunes I'm excited about right now aren't even German. I can shout out one *Wessi*, which is **Wadadda** from Cologne. I've been starting all my sets with his "Jah Kingdom" and he's got a slew of other great, unreleased tunes. He's topping my list of new dubstep producers and I'm hoping someone who reads this will check out www.myspace.com/wadadda and sign him up quick!

Another group that's poised for big things is **Monster Zoku Onsonb!**, a quintet of crazies from Australia; their only release so far was on Death\$ucker, but they're touring Europe this fall in support of an upcoming album. It's the perfect combination of pop, breakcore, and psychobilly (no, it's not just a funny thing to stick on your MySpace page)—all you need to do is check out their video for "Valentine" at www.monsterzoku.com and you'll be hooked.

Elemental, last seen on Hot Flush, has been making enough of a splash to get several Grade-A tracks signed. He's got a split ("Soul Fire" b/w "Tribute") coming on Destructive, and then his track "Stompa" will be on the Elements album on Urban Graffiti. Really awesome stuff that bridges skankin' dubstep and good, chunky breaks.

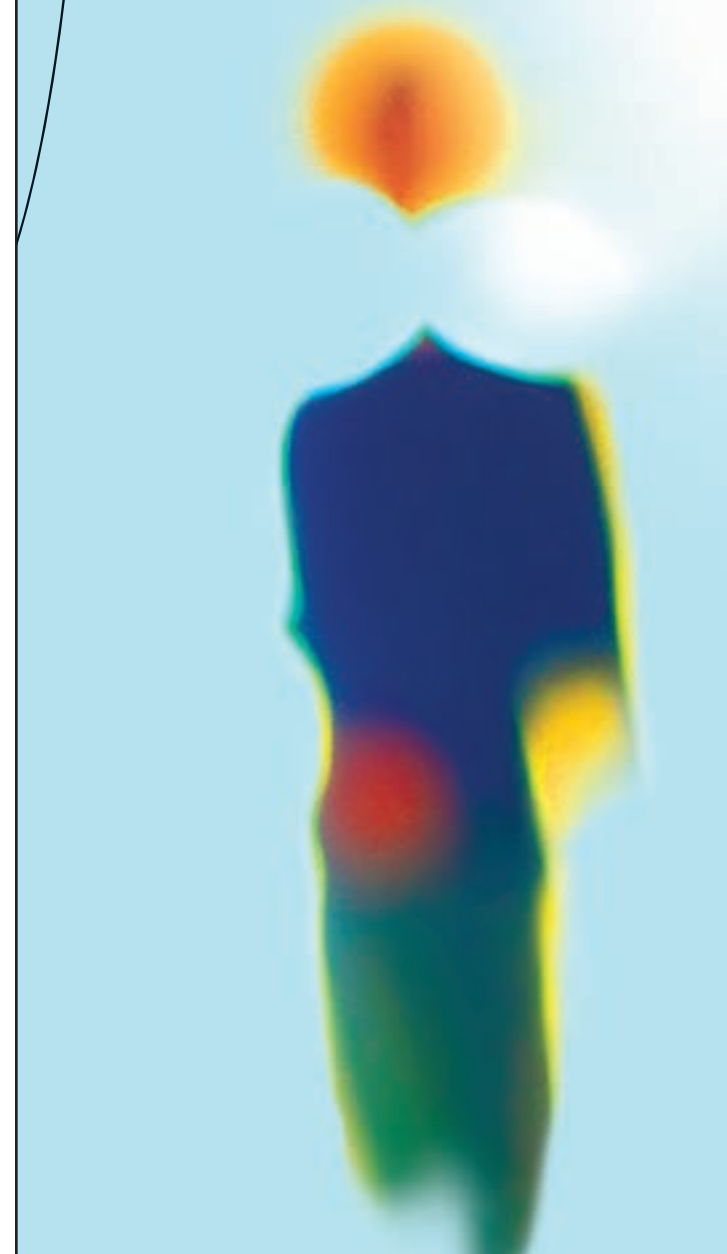
I'm really happy to hear that the second round of remixes of **Sileni's** "Twitchy Droid Leg" have been released on Offshore, with two extremely different and challenging mixes. One is by **Martzman** (there's a Berliner for you, at least temporarily), who absolutely shatters Sileni's original; there's something almost psychedelic in its lurching pace, but it keeps the awesomely heavy bass hits that hold it together. On the flip, **Vex'd** reconstructs the original down to breaks tempo (psst, some of us were playing it on 33 since it came out), giving it the classic Vex'd

head-nod plod and a good dose of their Vangelis-flavored synths. Outstanding. Look out for new stuff from Martzman coming on Plain Audio, and a mix from Offshore label boss **Clever** called *Science Faction* on Breakbeat Science.

David Last has the most recent release on the great Found/Unfound Sound conglomerate (www.unfoundsoundrecords.com), one of the best approaches to a net label I've seen yet; they've got 21 EPs released online and eight records in physical form (with two more on the way). I've been a fan of Last's for years, and this release (entitled "whatwhat?")—along with his stellar remix of David Linton's "Mr. Interference and the 13 Devils of Syncopation" (coming soon on The Social Registry) should tide me over until his second full-length.

Last but not least, gotta revisit my friend **Tittsworth's** place, and it would take a whole column to truly detail all of the crown prince of Baltimore club's activities. *The Bonus EP* is already out on Vicious Pop, he's got a track coming on **A-Trak's** Ammo Records, he's on the *Old Bay EP* with **Ayres** and **Catchdubs**, the self-released *EZ-T EP* should be out by press time, and he's working on a 100% original effort for Plant Recordings. Check www.tittsworth.com for loads of freebies from Mr. Eastern Motors.

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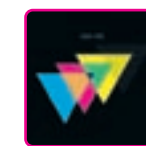
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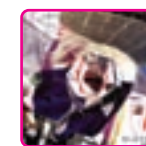
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Bonobo



Elizabeth Shepherd

Sometimes 12 inches is just too much—*just ask my wi...* So, yeah, small can be super. Like on the latest 7" offering from Ninja Tune-ster **Bonobo**. The new 45 from the monkey-monikered one has an a-side, "Nightlife," featuring the super-busy **Bajka** on the mic and a killer string hook, and on the b, a fantastic melancholy number with more strings and a shuffly, mid-tempo break by the name of "Recurring."

Another killer 7" in current rotation (and I hope I don't step on any hip-hop toes here) is the **Bun** (featuring **Phife Dawg**) slice on Pantone. The **ATCQ** member does his thing tight (like always) over a rolling beat, big bass, and some chilled-out piano, while the b is a more somber affair with a scratchy, sample-driven dissonant mood.

Because good things come in threes, one mo' 7" selection appears as the first offering from Mukatsuku Records. If you like it smooth, **Paul MacInnes and T.B.O.I.** have you covered as they keep Gonkyburg's rep for top tunes firm. "Even Though" lets Paul's fine honey tenor drip all over a round bottom end and rich piano chords, and "What You Do" is no slouch either. Sweet soul from Sweden!

Speaking of smooth tenors, always got to keep an eye the one-man army of soul that is **Colonel Red**. The title track from his album *Blue Eyed Blak* is out now on People Records' vinyl, with a fantastic funk treatment courtesy of Flowriders and a super-slinky **4Lux** remix of "Save a Prayer," with the beat busted just like we like it.

I love me some Adidas, so I instantly had a good feeling about the new **Track n Field** *Les Sportifs* EP, which features a nice rack of tennies on the label sticker. Definitely wasn't let down either. "Someday I Will" is my fave because of its gently broken Latin vibe, big piano chords, and fat synth bass. Good stuff on the other tracks, too, ranging from skanking mid-tempo to some truly classy house on the funk side.

As George Michael once said, "If you're gonna do it, do it right!" **John Kong's** Do Right! Music label has taken the advice to heart and brings us some wicked new goodness from Toronto courtesy of 22-year-old hotshot **Alister Johnson**. "Like a Star" is an absolutely gorgeous, broken uptempo number with squiggly keyboard lines and swoon-worthy vocals from Vancouver's **Alonzo**. With three versions, plus the raw bruk madness of "Feel It," which rocks some in-yer-face bass and plenty of chopped drums, this one's my pick of the month. Hands-down winner!

You know, Do Right! is doing it so right that we'll close things out with another one of their releases, this one from the **Elizabeth Shepherd Trio**. Lots of cats like to pay lip service to jazz, but this singer/songwriter/pianist from Toronto is doing her part to actually chart the new directions of the genre, with able help from **Colin Kingsmore** on the kit and **Scott Kemp** banging the bass. From the sprawling, samba-jazz workout of "Reversed" to the percolating scat that drives "George's Dilemma," Shepherd's sweet singing and loose but nimble work on the keys are well worth tracking down.



Future Jazz Guest Reviews:
Wouda

Sometimes it's easy to forget how much of an influence hip-hop has had worldwide. But then every once in a while, a producer like Wouda comes around and weaves the style so tightly into his own jazz creations that you have to step back for a second and realize that hip-hop as we know it is one hell of an adaptable form. The Netherlander known as Wouter Brandenburg, as much a self-professed fan of J Dilla as of Miles Davis, takes jazz and hip-hop instrumentals to new heights with his own productions (under a couple different names, the best of which is Bum on the Carpet) and those of others on his Dopeness Galore label. He's been DJing since the ripe age of 15 and, as you'll see, his jazzy stacks are pretty varied. But for a real taste of this promising newcomer's sweet free-funk, you'll want to check Bum on the Carpet's organ-and-breaks-fueled groover "Are You Down?" on Oriental Source. His debut LP hits early next year. *Jake Tisdale*
www.dopenessgalore.com

Q-TIP LIVE AT THE RENAISSANCE SAMPLER

Motown/US/12

I'm lucky enough to own Tip's *Abstractions* LP and knowing that he's got another one on the shelves, this sampler tells me that it's the one we've all been waiting for. Real hip-hop with live musicians, reuniting the old and new generations of hip-hop listeners. The standout is "Fever," and if it ain't Dilla's, it's certainly got his influence. *Wouda*

OMAR KISS IT RIGHT

Ether/UK/7

From "There's Nothing Like This" until now, Omar has always stayed fresh with his own unmistakable signature sound. Having seen him at the North Sea Jazz Festival I must give him his props. The extremely funky "Kiss It Right" and the heavy-sounding "Lay It Down" (feat. Estelle) prove he's here and kickin' it! *Wouda*

MOO MUSIQ

Up My Alley/GER/12

moO, a member of the Beatfanatic Fam (Kev Brown, 9th Wonder) opens with a soulful track on the new German label Up My Alley. Against his minimal production, Swedish singer Laila Adéle makes it like butter. With "Veranda" and "Spacetravelin'" moO proves he can handle sampling well and has a good ear for harmony. Keep it coming! *Wouda*

ALMA HORTON PRESENTS LADY ALMA GET TO KNOW ME ALBUM SAMPLER

Kindred Spirits/NETH/12

From Sylk 130 to Rednose Distrikt to Zap Mama, Philly's Lady Alma crosses all genres. She makes you raise your hands all night long. Now she touches you inside and leaves some of her soul there with you. Great! *Wouda*

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After Silence
by **Martin De Leon II**
THE OUTER ORBITS OF ELECTRONIC MUSIC



Warp Records killed electronic music's tomorrow. *Wizard of Oz* beats and math-nerd synths are *still* being copied. And even though I love Autechre with my morning Cheerios, I know that the avant-garde needs to be found in the unintentional. Bugged-out producers and rock bands need to stay fresh. Like Prince in a pink dress, this month we go crazy.

Professor Murder might be that future I envision. They left a Warped Tour aesthetic behind for some Hot 97-meets-Gang of Four action. Their new five-track EP, *Professor Murder Rides the Subway* (Kanine), is littered with nice cuts, especially the lead-off "Champion," where synthesizers get scientific and rowdy drums balance **Michael Bell-Smith's** voice.

Singing is history, says **To Live and Shave in LA**, the piecemeal group featuring **Andrew W.K.** and **Thurston Moore**. On their second album, *Noon and Eternity* (Menlo Park), four long-ass tracks skew traditional structures for formless rock meditations. If Alice Coltrane was in Sonic Youth and hated jazz, this is what she might sound like.

Shuta Hasunuma is like the Morton Feldman of modern Japanese electronic music. His self-titled debut on Austin's Western Vinyl begins with the hazy ambience of "Departure" and ends up being a study in nature's found sounds—"nature" being a tropical island filled with robots.

The pillow pop of the queer New York band **The Ballet** is also pretty great. *Mattachine!* is an excellent foray into Smiths-land, as this full-length is all heartfelt melodies and crunchy drums. Gems like "In My Head" and "The Face of Everything" make it worth chasing down on www.thepirateship.org. They are currently without label, so start courting.

Beach House has a home in Carpark Records, the label putting out their excellent new self-titled record. Hope Sandoval-esque ditties are the product of **Victoria Legrand's** husky voice and **Alex Scally's** brilliant melodies. "Master of None" pitter-patters with soft drums and a crinkled organ while "Apple of Orchard" is one of the prettiest songs this year, hands down.

Former **Erase Errata** guitarist **Sara Jaffe** is also making some pretty music. With the simplicity of Mirah, her new *Salt & Water* EP (Cherchez La Femme) is the complete opposite of her E² days: full of complicated yet subtle and calm acoustic songs capped by her soft voice. Totally worth picking up.

To Rocco Rot member **Robert Lippok** drops some 16-bit beats on his new EP, *Robot* (Western Vinyl). Where a lot of producers forget nuances like melody, rhythm, and subtlety, Lippok uses them beautifully, like toys. "After Work," for example, couples soft pulses with just enough rhythmic pull to get you on the dancefloor, even if it's the dancefloor of a videogame.

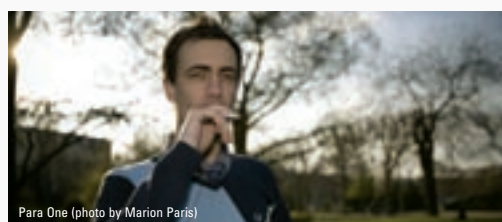
Ceiling Songs (Locust Music), the new record by Portland sound artist **Ethan Rose**, would make Stockhausen proud. Made of broken music boxes, sampled birds, and delicate piano melodies, these recordings are memorable for their heartfelt attention to detail.

With the songs on her great new record *On Leaving* (Fat Cat), New York songstress **Nina Nastasia**, of the hummingbird voice and minimal acoustic jams, reminds you (particularly on one of the best songs of the year, "Jim's Room") that electronics don't always matter.

I guess *that* is new.



Bubble Metropolis
by **MI Tronik**
TECHNO: MINIMAL, BANGING, AND BEYOND



After what was probably one of the hottest summers ever, I wondered what type of funk would emerge from all the warm, damp, bacteria-filled bedrooms and studios where techno producers create their best work. **Mike & Dot's** *Lego* EP (Sub Static) is a pretty good example of the filth now spewing forth. This minimal-funk four-pack of tracks bounces (rather than batters) you with heavy swing on the hi-hats and odd, squelchy basslines. "Back Up" and "Fat 32" are the strongest cuts.

Also on the stinky techno tip is Paris' **Frankie**. His latest EP, *Hunt* (Frankie), shuffles its way through a bleep-filled glitch world of bass and funk. Squeeze this one in before or after tunes from dirtybird or Morris Audio.

But fuck the club! Think about the environment, like **Monolake**, who returns with the bombastic and cautionary *Alaska Melting* (Mutualism) 12". This is barren yet propulsive music that conjures images of polar bears drowning in search of iceberg rest stops. Deep.

On the less frosty side, could there be such a thing as "summertime techno"? **My My's** "Butterflies & Zebras" (Aus) single certainly gives it a go. A gauzy, spacious vibe carries the a-side, and the **John Dahlbäck** mix on the flip anchors itself firmly with a tough snare/kick combo and a corrosive bassline.

Of all the promos I received in the past month, **Carl Finlow's** "Count On It" (Seventh Sign) 12" was one of the most impressive. I've always been a bit of a sucker for melodic techno and this one is definitely just that, but it doesn't overdo it. Keep "Reprise" and "Fast Lane" at the ready.

The Minus and Plus 8 camp has unleashed an entirely new sub-label called Items & Things, and its first release is *Spaceships & Pings*, which features tracks by **Konrad Black**, **Magda**, **Marc**

Houle, and **Troy Pierce**. I'm guessing this label is dedicated to music that's not quite minimal, not quite maximal, yet firmly rooted in the groove. It kind of sounds like everyone used the same studio to produce the cuts on this effort, and that isn't necessarily a bad thing. Consistency is key in producing music, that's why the latest **Zombie Nation** single "Booster" (UKW Records) is such a treat. This burner is aimed at the dancefloor and wouldn't sound out of place alongside tunes on labels like Systematic and Glasgow's Soma, who have released **Alex Smoke's** "Make My Day" as a remix 12". Lusine and Actress supply the remixes, which take the 114-bpm original and ratchet it into an uptempo excursion.

I simply cannot wait to unleash the new remixes of **Para One's** "DuDun-Dun" (Institubes/Naïve) on an unsuspecting club floor. **MSTRKRFT** and **Boys Noize** re-fix the mix and the outcome is pure peak-time action.

And finally, **Margot's** "Autumno" (Craft Music) is a fitting way to round out a summer's worth of sweaty techno. This is deep—some might say austere—synth-techno. The original mix has a distinct "deer in the headlights" vibe to it, and is my favorite. Also not to be missed is the **Giaga** "Robot" dub which is strictly for the adventurous 5 a.m. vibe technicians!

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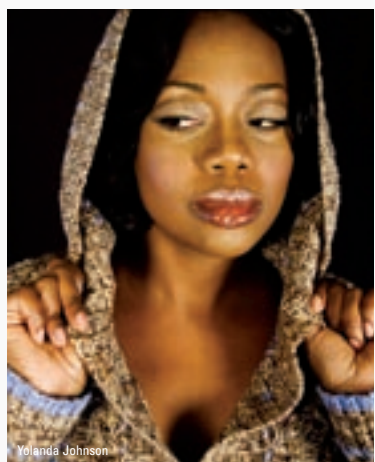
All Teeth & Knuckles (photo by David Lubarski)



All Allure Cover



Paulie Ryme



Yolanda Johnson

So there we were, about 20 miles north of Mendocino, blind drunk and frolicking in the redwoods, when it hit me. *This* is the life we all think about leading—here, amongst 200 of our closest friends (albeit dressed as pirates), raging all-out for the weekend. I actually fought a man in a tent about our 4 a.m. decibel levels. Fucking landed gentry! But somewhere in between nude volleyball and DJing in a wooded hilltop meadow, it all started to make sense. Making rent might be tight, but here's a sample Sunday afternoon: load a backpack full of records and bike over the hill to the ballpark. Drink with Jon and Amy at Acme, find a free ticket to the Giants, and go hang with The Honkey Krew and various low-rent vagrants in the bleachers. Then ride over to the Cyclecide gig and spin outdoors with Jef Leopard until the neighbors call the cops. Stop by to see Shawn at the Transfer for a nitecap and pedal home to my little castle in the sand. Is that such a bad existence? Life is good. Quit complaining.

1) SEBASTIAN "ROSS ROSS ROSS"

Ed Banger/FRA/12
We may have to stop hating the French if they keep putting out records like this. The a-side is a little questionable, but turn that motherfucker over and bang "Walkman" until your ears bleed. This is my shit right now: chunky, guitar-driven electro with a big warehouse beat. Me and Big Dave Mabry will be zoning this at BOCA until the wheels fall off.

2) V/A ALL TEETH & TRIANGULAR SUNSHINE

Pish Posh/US/CD
When you DJ with a guy called Burnt Reynolds, it's a good idea to go to whatever party he hands you a flyer for. Especially when his partner Pozibelle is the grooviest little DJ chick you've encountered in many moons. So I expected big things, but I wasn't ready for the thunderstorm that is

All Teeth & Knuckles. Dude's got songs called "Validate My Steez" and "Fuck Your Jacket." He's like a walking "fuck you!" to all the hipster haircuts who infest the Mission.

3) SANTOS

demo/US/CD
Kool DJ Rize brought this cat down to the Red Wine Social and we drank beer and kicked it. Then I went home and played his shit. Damn. What if Eminem was brown and had way sicker beats and came from San Carlos? Rugged, bilingual hip-hop from one to watch.

4) KIDGUSTO RE-GROOVES VOLUME 1

True Grooves/US/12EP
It looks a little suspicious when you show up at the party with, like, three records, and absolutely kill it. Kidgusto makes it look easy with his latest floor-filler. "Walks Like Rex" is deadly and his Beastie Boys re-fix is brilliant.

5) PUBLIC ENEMY BRING THAT BEAT BACK

Koch/US/CD
I must admit that I was skeptical at first—if it ain't broke, don't fix it—but trust P.E. to do the remix thing right. Twenty years and still the most important group in music.

6) RHYTHM ROOTS ALL-STARS

"J.J.D. (AFRODISIAC SOUND SYSTEM REMIX)"
Scion/US/12
These cats are hot enough, but throw Afrodisiac in the mix and that shit's just fire. Crucial Afro-heat with a big stomping beat and horns for days.

7) PAULIE RHYME FEAT. FELIX "DIRT MCGIRT"

BrownTown/US/12
Tough stuff from this Finless Brown MC, joined by Felix from Heiruspex. Piano-driven, with a massive beat—this one would make Old Dirt proud.

8) DAN THE AUTOMATOR 2K7

Decon/US/CD
I'm vehemently against videogames, and to tell you the truth, I'm not a big fan of basketball, but Dan's the man, and he's at his very best here, joined by folks like E-40, Ghostface, Slim Thug, Mos Def, and Hieroglyphics.

9) V/A DEATH BEFORE DISTEMPER

DC/UK/CD
An overflowing vat of thick electro-funk from the likes of The Emperor Machine, Alexander's Dark Band, and the mighty, mighty Depth Charge.

10) YOLANDA JOHNSON VIOLET FLOWER

demo/US/CD
Shimmering vocals glide over smooth, SA-RA-ish beats. Gal's got mad flavor. File next to D'Angelo and Macy Gray.

11) NOUVELLE VAGUE BANDE A PART

Luaka Bop/US/CD
This one's gotta be heard to be fully comprehended. Imagine The Style Council covering The Cramps. With Peggy Honeywell on vocals.

12) V/A MIDNIGHT SOUL 3

KinkySweet/US/2CD
S.F. DJ Tom Thump comes through with his signature blend of neo-soul gems for the late-night hours. The Rebirth, Rich Medina, Kim Hill, and Ubiquity's latest act Owusu & Hannibal all shine bright. This is your new sex music.

LUCKY 13) ALL ALLURE

Die Gestalten Verlag/GER/book
And speaking of sex, how about 150 pages of contemporary erotica, spanning the globe and the worlds of graphic design, illustration, photography, fashion, and fine art? Yum.



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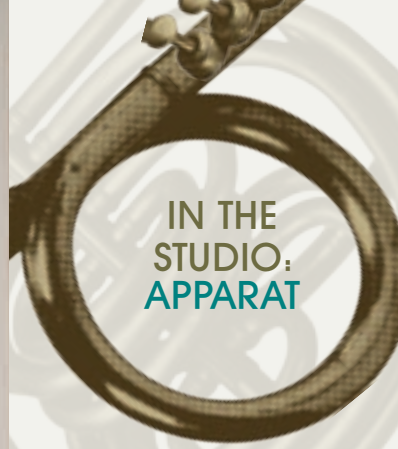
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A bubble bath of clicks and blips burbles forth from a Berlin techno hideaway.
 WORDS: BRANDON IVERS
 PHOTO: RAGNAR SCHMUCK

"I can't switch off in Berlin. I always feel like there's work to be done," admits Sascha Ring (a.k.a. Apparat) after a four-day production binge. "I completely forget what to do outside of the studio." Not unlike the city in which he works, Ring's own success has grown exponentially since his full-length *Duplex* appeared on Shitkatapult in 2003. Since then, collaborations with BPitch Control owner Ellen Allien resulted in this year's *Orchestra of Bubbles*, an album praised on both sides of the dance/rock divide for finding middle ground between floor-focused techno and the quirky IDM of Apparat's past. Yet despite all these notches in his production belt, Ring started out as a drummer, and he's careful to envision the laptop as an instrument, especially when playing live. Here's a look into the complex machinations behind techno's newest tastemaker.

I HEARD YOU WROTE YOUR OWN MAX/MSP TOOL FOR PLAYING LIVE. HOW DOES IT WORK?

The [patch] I wrote is very well assigned to the controller we use, so in the end it's some kind of digital mixer with lots of effects for each channel. There's not a lot of buttons on the mixer, but you can select channels and you have endless knobs, [so] you have a lot of control. I've used this thing for, like, four years, and now I can play it like a guitar.

YOU'VE BEEN USING THE SAME PATCH FOR FOUR YEARS?

Yeah. I mean, it's developing, but I don't really have time to take it much further. But to be honest, I don't really have many ideas of what I could change. Really, the only reason I did it was because there was no Ableton available when I started playing live. So I had to figure out a way to do what I needed, and I met Kit Clayton and all these guys and was completely stoked by the way they played. It was just one computer and one controller, and I was begging them to [show me how they did it]. Eventually they just gave me their patch, and I started learning how [Max] worked. But at some point, I decided... I don't [expletive] understand this. So I had to program it myself. And it's pretty messy.

ARE YOU PUTTING A LOT OF THOUGHT INTO WHAT YOU'RE DOING ON STAGE?

When Ellen and I first started talking about playing live, we wanted to do something special. It's always kind of boring at festivals to watch people play just on laptops. But it turned out it wasn't that

easy. So we still have a lot of computer stuff going on, but we're dancing and Ellen is singing. We're trying to be entertaining! And if the set goes bad, or there's six people there...after 10 beers... you start dancing again.

YOU DON'T SEEM TO GET TRAPPED STARING AT THE SCREEN WHEN YOU PLAY.

In the end, it's important to look like you're doing something. I designed my setup with a Kaoss Pad and a drum computer that I can tweak, which forces me to move around. But it's funny... a key moment was when I played this show and I couldn't put the mixer near me, [so] I had to keep running over to it. I realized it wasn't really so bad because if you don't have everything near you, you have to move.

WHEN YOU'RE BACK IN THE STUDIO, DO YOU PREFER WORKING WITH OTHER PEOPLE?

I'd been making music on my own for my whole life, and then Ellen came along and said, "Let's work on stuff together," and it was kind of hard. But I started recording different instruments and I had to deal with people. I had to learn how to speak about music. At some point, I just felt ready to do it, and I called Ellen again. I was really happy to leave the [solitary] nerd thing behind.

WHAT'S YOUR SECRET TO FINISHING TRACKS?

It took me a long time to figure out when I was destroying something. I don't think I do that anymore. You just learn to notice, very quickly, when you're going down the wrong path. But for me, a second opinion is the main key for not destroying tracks. I have that now with Ellen, since we work on so much stuff together. And now, I feel kind of lonely in the studio without her.

Apparat and Ellen Allien's *Orchestra of Bubbles* is out now on BPitch Control. www.apparat.net



In Apparat's studio, Korg Kaoss Pad, Max/MSP, Korg Electribe R Rhythm Synthesizer



ARTIST TIPS: LOTTERBOYS

When Mack Goudy Jr. croons—Tom Jones-on-the-moon-style—“*She’s got two of the longest legs/ That make the sweetest ass of themselves*” on “*Heroine*” one can only wonder, “What the hell kind of effect is that on his vocals?” More than any genre-defining early ‘90s techno comp, The Lotterboys’ shape-shifting debut *Animalia* (Eskimo) is probably the best example of the Detroit-Berlin connection, with Motown boy Goudy (a.k.a. Detroit Grand Pubahs’ Paris the Black Fu) providing the booty-club toasts for mad-scientist electro-rock beats from Terranova’s Shapemod and Fetisch. But seriously, how’d they get the vocals like that? Here’s their five-point explanation. *Derek Grey*
www.lotterboys.com

1. T.C. ELECTRONIC FIREWORX

We used the T.C. FireworX for wild pitch-shifting effects. This unit has some great pitch algorithms in it and that is the only reason why I haven’t sold it yet. Used on “*Superdope*” and more. *Shapemod*

2. EMS VOCODER 2000

This is a machine that I don’t own myself; I have to borrow it from a friend. I tried to buy one but these machines are hard to find. It’s an original box from the ‘70s—very simple to use and sounds amazing. Nothing beats this analog original. You can hear it on [the Black Sabbath cover] “*Ironman*” and some others. *Shapemod*

3. UREI BLACKFACE 1176 IN BRITISH MODE WITH CHANDLER LTD-1 MICPREAMP/EQ

If you press all buttons of a Urei 1176 at the same time, you get you get some crazy sounds. If you add that sound while you’re recording, it can be very inspiring for the singer. It’s very noisy, but who cares. *Shapemod*

4. LOGIC SPACE DESIGNER

I think that convolution reverbs like Space Designer or Altiverb sound great. I just sampled my favorite preset of my Lexicon PCM 70 and if you load the impulse response into Space Designer it sounds very, very close. That’s the fun part of the digital revolution. *Shapemod*

5. ROLAND SPACEECHO 201 AND 501

Still amazing. These two units sound totally different so I have to keep both. Great dirt factor in the digital world. Real knobs, old tape, lots of noise and fun. There is no way I would sell these. *Shapemod*



1



2



4



5



GRIFFIN

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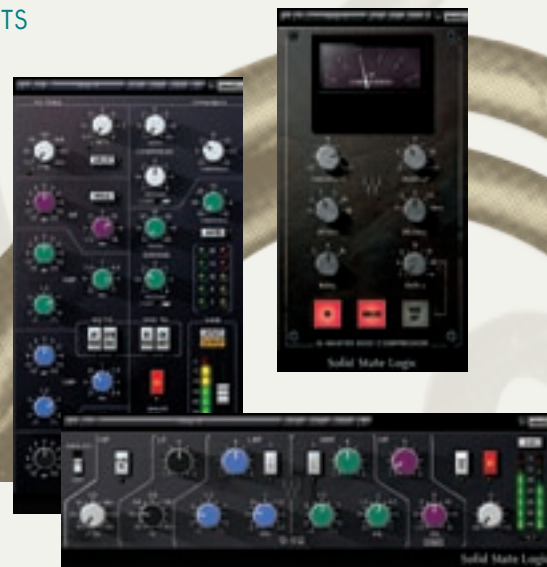
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ROCK THE BOAT

Waves SSL 4000 Collection Plug-ins
MSRP: \$1000; www.waves.com

The Solid State Logic 4000 console is the sort of mixing desk that artists like Green Day and Sheryl Crow record on, which is another way of saying it's absurdly expensive but has gorgeous sound and turns crappy songs into Number 1 hits. So, it was something of a masterstroke for Waves to tap into the myth of this desk and attempt a software recreation with the **SSL 4000 Collection** of plug-ins. No doubt everyone was secretly hoping the final product would be merely passable, but the fact is, Waves has yet again raised the bar. The EQs are simple yet incredibly powerful while the buss compressor can bring out the rudeness of the original desk if you so desire. Match that with the optional Chris Lord-Alge presets, and there is a lot to love about (and learn from) this collection. *Brandon Ivers*

DID WE MENTION
 THAT YOU CAN
 TALK ON IT, TOO?



GREATEST AMERICAN HERO

Helio Hero Multimedia Device
MSRP: \$275; www.helio.com

If leaving MySpace for even a minute gives you the heebie-jeebies, Helio's **Hero** is for you. This chunky black slider handset offers a bevy of multimedia features: a 2MP camera, 70 MB of space for MP3s (blasted out of mini stereo speakers), pictures, video, and decent 3D games. Did we mention that you can talk on it, too? The real draw is the high-speed connection's pipeline to the regular ol' internet, Helio's H.O.T. (Helio On Top) real-time info service, and mobile MySpace access, where you can blog, read email, and more. Like MySpace, the Helio is crazy customizable, outfitted with screens, rings, and downloads ranging from tacky to stylish. *Rob Geary*

NOW IF ONLY
 GRIFFIN WOULD
 MAKE AN IPOD
 HOLDER FOR
 MY DOG.



DIGITAL BLING BLING

Griffin Technology TuneBuds
MSRP \$34.99; www.griffintechnology.com

While the ongoing public fetishization of the iPod Nano is a fascinating cultural phenomena in itself, what about the myriad Nano accessories? With all the armbands, leg bands, neck bands, and little plastic cases available, it seems like there really must be a huge market for pimped-out Nanos. So leave it to Griffin Technology to pull the ultimate trump card and integrate a holder, stereo ear buds, and a fashion piece all into one. Plugging into the bottom of your Nano with a silver lanyard, the **TuneBuds** let you floss your MP3 player right on your neck. Fantastic if you live in Irvine, California, but not so great if you're walking through Central Park at midnight. Now if only Griffin would make an iPod holder for my dog. *Brandon Ivers*

BEAT HAPPENING

Cakewalk Kinetic 2 Audio Production Software
MSRP: \$99; www.cakewalk.com

Something like a software translation of a Roland Groovebox, **Kinetic 2** offers a cheap, all-in-one solution to music production: sequencer, "groove library," virtual drum computer, and sound editor all in the same application. This new iteration of the program offers support for VST plug-ins, along with a couple of its own instruments (specifically a virtual analog synth, as well as a sampler)—something sorely lacking in the original Kinetic. Sadly, we did run into some bugs when attempting to ReWire the program with Ableton Live. When it works, though, Kinetic 2 is a nice (and cheap) introductory tool for aspiring Windows-based computer musicians, with tastes ranging from the *boom-bap* to the *boing boom-tchak*. *Evan Shamoon*



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Rapture is available for both Mac & PC.
 For more information and sound examples, please visit www.cakewalk.com.

* With Free 1.1 Update for registered Customers. Download from www.cakewalk.com, April 2006.

cakewalk RAPTURE

Virtual Synthesizer for Mac & PC



KEY INGREDIENTS

Behringer UMX61 MIDI Controller
MSRP: \$129.99; www.behringer.com

Into the crowded field of keyboard MIDI controllers struts the **UMX61**, with its 61 full-size, velocity-sensitive keys, 10 programmable MIDI controllers, and eight user-set buttons. The keys have a decent amount of weight to them and, happily, the knobs don't feel like they're going to go airborne in two months. With its quasi-futuristic casing this is not the hottest-looking keyboard of 2006, but if you're trying to keep things on the low-budget tip, it comes with just enough software (Ableton Live Lite and a disc full of freeware VST instruments) to be a stand-alone music composition/synth package. Add one part computer, two parts hands, and you too can start churning out the mega-hits with ease. *Evan Shamoon*



MOBILE MELODIES

SanDisk Sansa e260 MP3 Player
MSRP: \$229; www.sandisk.com

Hailing as the world's leader in flash-memory technology, Sandisk takes the consumer electronic market to new heights with the introduction of the **Sansa e260**, a sexy, streamlined MP3/video player. Featuring 20 hours of USB-charged battery life and 4GB of flash memory, this alloy-cased unit can handle abuse while unleashing hours of your favorite jams. The interface is easier to navigate than your ROKR phone, and allows you to jump between music folders, video folders, and a voice recorder with the lackadaisical twist of a simple jog wheel. Powered to perform over a USB 2.0 connection, the e260 appears on your computer as a flash drive, making for a quick drag-and-drop of audio and data files. Video loads via a bundled software converter program, which also boasts chimp-friendly operation. With the e260's affordable price, the next apple you purchase may be from Safeway. *Praxis*

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NOT A BAD
CHOICE FOR
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YOU'LL GET CRISP SOUND
ALL THE WAY THROUGH.

GETTING TECHNICA

Audio Technica ATH-PRO700 Headphones
MSRP \$279.00; www.audio-technica.com

Producers can be as superstitious as football players, which is why there are certain pieces of gear you're likely to find in every studio. Audio Technica's ATH series is one such item, especially when it comes to closed-back headphones. While the **PRO700s** represent the more affordable end of the ATH product line, they still deliver dynamic, clear, isolated sound. All in all, not a bad choice for reference monitoring. The Pro700s are also a nice choice for DJs, as they're able to get ridiculously loud before distortion kicks in. *Brandon Ivers*

DOCK 'N' ROLL

Emerson Research iE600 iPod Home Audio System
MSRP: \$179.95; www.emersonradio.com

Emerson probably ruled your home's electronic appliances when you were a kid: check your old alarm clock, the family's first microwave, or that radio Dad had hanging in the shower. Now they're in the iPod-friendly home-audio market, and still welcome on the bookshelf or kitchen counter. For its price, the **iE600** is remarkably attractive, particularly on the tricky low-end, where you'd least expect this tiny, sleek box to excel. The highs are great, too, and provided your audio files are nicely encoded, you'll get crisp sound all the way through. There aren't a ton of iPod-navigation controls that don't rely on touching the docked iPod itself (the remote control is pretty basic, with CD and iPod track-skip, radio, and volume controls), and EQs more or less have to be set in your iPod's prefs, but for filling a small room on the cheap, it's a great little piece. *Ken Taylor*



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OFF THE WALL

DJ legend Westbam recalls raving in Berlin, pre- and post-Wall.

Words Patrick Sisson
Illustration Anje Jager

What's in a name? Quite a bit if you're 41-year-old Maximilian Lenz, better known as Westbam. The moniker—a combination of his home province Westphalia with that of his musical idol Afrika Bambaataa—dates him as a teenager of the '80s, and suggests what he would eventually become famous for: being one of the first DJ/producers to incorporate hip-hop influences (especially breaks) into house and techno. Though the name Westbam may be dated, Lenz stands for ideals that are timeless. He's a Berlin legend, channeling punk energy to the dancefloor with his Low Spirit label (founded in 1985), co-founding the Loveparade and Mayday raves, and even representing his country during a 1988 DJ performance at the Seoul Olympics. *XLR8R* spoke with Lenz about the effects of reunification on the club scene.

What was your first encounter with hip-hop, which initially got you into DJing?

Westbam: As a teenager, I was into punk rock. In the early '80s, a lot of punk rock was new wave and electronic. It was about trying something new and innovative. So when I first heard hip-hop, especially tracks like Bambaataa's "Death Mix" that focused on mixing, it struck me as a new form of minimal electronic music. It was hardcore and not commercial and appealed to me.

What was the club scene like in Berlin before the Wall fell?

West Berlin was an island in East Germany and a weird place to live. In the rest of West Germany, you had to draw for military service, but in Berlin, you didn't. It attracted freaks from all over the place. If you wanted a career, you would have gone to another big city. If you were a freak, you went to Berlin. People would listen to underground music, drink vodka, and take cheap drugs.

What were the clubs like?

In the early '80s, the best club for dance culture was Metropolis, this big, dark, half-gay spot. There were a lot of smaller spots playing industrial stuff. The first acid house club was the UFO club, an illegal cellar; a stinking, dark hole you'd enter by climbing down a ladder.

How did the club community react to the Wall falling?

Before that happened, we had radio stations in West Berlin broadcasting dance music on Saturday night. Kids from East Berlin would listen to them, so when the Wall fell, the scene got packed with these new kids that knew all the music. Suddenly UFO was packed, and the street would be lined with all those funny-looking East German cars. These days techno isn't a fashion—it's a way of life. But all the clubs are

in East Berlin now; it's by far the hipper place. All the changes are happening in East Berlin, where the West is like any other part of West Germany.

Did you ever play in East Berlin before the Wall fell?

A few times. Of course, the police would listen to every record when you crossed the border to find out if it had anything against the regime. That's why we didn't do it very often.

What was the inspiration behind starting the Loveparade?

It was a typical, anarchistic Berlin idea. We only had this little club, UFO, so we thought, "Let's do the ultimate trick and go to the police and say we want to do a demonstration for peace and love. We're citizens, right? We're going to get police protection and have a party on Berlin's main street. Let's do something obvious, with weird people and weird sounds that people won't understand; and if they want to join us, that's cool." It was thrilling. Now everybody says they were on the float during the first Loveparade in '88, but the first one happened in '89.

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XLR8R (ISSN 1526-4246) is published monthly with bimonthly issues in January/February and July/August for \$20 a year by Amalgam Media, Inc., 425 Divisadero Street #203A, San Francisco, CA 94117. Periodicals Postage Paid at San Francisco, CA and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to XLR8R, 1388 Haight Street, #105, San Francisco, CA 94117.

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